Ibn Ezra on Genesis
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Ibn Ezra on Genesis

Introduction

Invoking 1 I.E. opens with a poetic introduction. In fact, in Hebrew the entire introduction was in rhyme. the name of the Great and Awe-inspiring God,
I begin to explain the meaning of the Torah.
I beseech thee, O God of my father Abraham,
deal kindly with thy servant Abraham. 2 The first Abraham refers to the patriarch, the second to the author, Abraham son of Meir.
May the opening of thy words give light
to thy servant the son of thy servant Meir.
And from the salvation of thy face, 3 Cf. Ps. 80:4, 8. may help come
to the son of thy maid servant who is named Ben Ezra.
This Book of Jashar, 4 I.E. called his commentary on the Torah, The Book of Jashar. Cf. Josh. 10:13. composed by Abraham the poet,
is bound by ropes of grammar.
The eyes of the intelligent will find it fit.
All who take hold of it will be glad.
The above mentioned Abraham the Spaniard says:
Those who comment on the Torah do so in one of five ways.
The first way (to Biblical interpretation) ranges far and wide (from the text). It is beyond the interest of our time. If truth be likened to a dot within a circle then this approach can be compared to the periphery of the circle, which goes round about only to return to its starting point. A number of great scholars chose this approach, namely, the wise men of the academies in Moslem countries, such as Rabbi Isaac 5 It is not clear which Isaac I.E. is referring to. Some identify him with the philosopher Isaac Israeli (c. 850-950). Cf. Weiser. who composed two books on the first chapter of Genesis, from In the beginning to were finished, and did not finish his commentary, so verbose was he. He makes mention of the believers in a god of light and a god of darkness 6 Zoroastrianism (Weiser). in his comments on the verse Let there be light (Gen. 1:3). But he (Rabbi Isaac) walked in darkness without being aware of it. In his comment on And the earth brought forth grass (Gen. 1:12), he brought forth words from his fancy 7 Literally, heart. He did not quote anyone but gave his own opinion or invented facts. and spoke about trees and plants both large and small. On the other hand, on the term living creature 8 Weiser. he quoted foreign sciences. In the same vein, Rabbi Saadiah, Gaon of the Diaspora, commenting on the verse Let there be lights (Gen. 1:14), quoted the opinion of secular scholars and gave the dimensions of the heavenly bodies according to the astronomers. Similarly Rabbi Samuel ben Hofni gathered wind in his fists (chofnav) (Prov. 30:4) 9 A play on the words chofni (Hofni) and chofnav. in his lengthy comments on And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba (Gen. 28:10). He there mentioned every prophet by name, and how many times each one was exiled from his place. He also expounded on the value of travel. The only value of his commentary is its length. On the verse And he dreamed (Gen. 28:12) he expostulated on dream interpretation and why people see what they see when they are asleep. If one desires to learn secular wisdom let him

learn it from the works of experts in these fields and let him examine their proofs and see if they are correct. The Geonim only cited from these works without offering any of the proofs as to the veracity of the opinions they quoted. 10 The reader thus has no way of knowing whether what is quoted is true or not. Some of the Geonim had no knowledge of the method of the ancient sages and how they arrived at their conclusions. A second approach is the one chosen by the distorters, albeit they are Israelites. They think that they have reached the very point of the circle, but in reality they do not know its place. This is the way of the Sadducees, 11 The Karaites. The medieval rabbis called the Karaites Sadducees because like the Sadducees they denied the authority of the Rabbinic sages, the Mishnah and the Talmud. such as Anan, 12 The founder of Karaism. He lived in the 8th century. Benjamin, 13 Benjamin ben Moses Nahavendi (c. 9th century). He was the first Karaite scholar to write in Hebrew and was responsible for the term "Karaites" replacing "Ananites." Ben Mashiach, Joshua, 14 Some of the printed editions omit Ben Mashiach and Joshua. Hasan ben Mashiach was a Karaite who engaged in polemics with Saadiah Gaon. Joshua was a Karaite scholar often quoted by I.E. It is suggested that the reference is to Joshua ben Judah Abu al-Farag Purkan, one of the founders of Karaism (Weiser). and of all heretics who do not believe the words of the transmitters of tradition, 15 The Rabbinic sages. turning away from it to the right or the left. 16 According to Rabbinic tradition, the Biblical verse, thou shalt not turn aside from the sentence which they shall declare unto thee, to the right hand, nor to the left (Deut. 17:11), is a command to heed the words of the "transmitters of tradition." Each one interprets verses as he sees fit. They do the same even with respect to commandments and laws. They are ignorant of the form of Hebrew and therefore err even in grammar. How can people rely on their opinion, with regard to the precepts when they are always changing their mind, moving from one extreme to the other? They do this because there is not a single commandment fully explained in the Torah itself. I will note one example. 17 The "one example" offered by I.E. is, "Nowhere in the Torah do we find the rules governing the establishment of the years nor how to calculate months." However, he digresses before coming to the point. Someone conversant with these things will recognize its significance because it entails the penalty of karet (shortened life span) with regard to eating on Yom Kippur, eating leaven on Passover and, for one who is in a state of ritual purity on Passover, not offering the paschal lamb. 18 One who is "impure" on Passover is forbidden to sacrifice the paschal lamb. Cf. Num. 9:1-14. Our rendition is based on the Vatican manuscript of I.E. henceforth written Vat. Ebr. 38. The printed texts read, "and leavened bread on Passover which one in a state of purity did not observe." This is an impossible reading. It also involves the seven rest days of the festivals, 19 There are seven festival days when work is Biblically prohibited. They are: the first and seventh day of Passover, Shavuoth, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the first day of Sukkot and Shemini Atzereth. the festival sacrifices, dwelling in booths and the sounding of the shofar. Nowhere in the Torah do we find clearly stated the rules governing the establishment of years nor how to calculate months. These wretched, poor in learning, find support for their calendric calculations in the verse and let them be for signs, and for seasons (festivals) 20 The Hebrew word for seasons is mo'adim. Mo'adim also means festivals. Genesis 1:14 reads, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven…and let them be for signs, and for seasons (mo'adim). The Karaites interpreted this verse: Let them be for signs for the festival, i.e., let the moon (the lunar month) determine the time of the festivals. (Gen. 1:14). But they don't know that Let them be is in the plural and speaks about the sun, moon and stars. 21 Scripture reads ve-hayu not ve-hayah. Ve-hayu is a plural and so cannot refer only to the moon. As to the person who says that the vav of u-le-

mo'adim (and for seasons) is superfluous and that for signs is connected to for seasons, 22 Aside from the above, the verse presents another problem for the Karaites. It does not read: and let them be for signs for seasons (festivals). It reads: and let them be for signs and for seasons (festivals). The Karaites tried to get around the problem by claiming that the vav of u-le-mo'adim is superfluous and should not be translated. U-le-mo'adim should be rendered: for seasons (festivals) rather than: and for seasons. Thus the verse is to be translated: And let them be for signs for seasons (festivals). let him search for a friend to tell it to; perhaps he will believe it. If we do find two or three superfluous vavs, how do we know that this is one of them, 23 I.E. concedes that there are a few superfluous vavs in Scripture, but he asks, how do we know that this is one of them? since we find thousands of vavs in Scripture which have meaning? Furthermore, the verse Who appointedst the moon for seasons (le-mo'adim) (Ps. 104:19) is not in accordance with the interpretation of those whose loins totter. 24 Cf. Ps. 69:24. The Karaites interpreted Ps. 104:19 as meaning God appointed the moon for festivals. Even if Scripture explicitly stated (which it never does) that the moon shall be for a sign for the appointed seasons (mo'adim) falling in the various months, how could we determine that the Bible speaks of God's holy appointed seasons, since various types of appointed seasons are mentioned in the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Holy Writings? 25 The point is if the Bible said: the moon shall determine the mo'adim, how do we know that the mo'adim refer to religious festivals? The word mo'ed may refer to any appointed time and does not necessarily refer to a religiously appointed one. Furthermore, even if the Bible explicitly said: let the moon be as a sign for God's holy seasons, 26 Even if the Bible explicitly stated the moon shall be for a sign for God's holy festivals, it would not solve the problem as to what constitutes a month. a very important aspect of the problem remains to be solved. 27 Namely, what constitutes a new moon (the beginning of a month)? In order to understand what follows it is necessary to have some idea of medieval astronomy. The daily movement of the moon varies between approximately 11 and 15 degrees in a rather complicated fashion. To explain these motions the ancients introduced a complex scheme of combined circular movements. (For a full discussion of this problem and the solution offered for it, see Yale Judaica series, Vol. XI, The Code of Maimonides, Sanctification of the New Moon, p. 126). Cherez explains that the moon was believed to move within four spheres. The first is called galgal ha-domeh (the all-encompasing sphere). It is so called because like the zodiacal sphere, it encompasses the whole world and like it has the earth as its center. This sphere turns from east to west. Within the all-encompassing sphere lies another sphere called galgal ha-noteh (the inclined sphere). This sphere is not contained within the galgal ha-domeh but intersects it. The chord connecting the points of intersection are called the teli (the dragon). The point at which the moon moves north of this intersection is called the head (or top) of the teli ; its opposite point, where the moon moves south, is called the tail of the teli. The galgal ha-noteh is inclined five degrees above the galgal ha-domeh on the north and five degrees below it on the south, hence the term galgal ha-noteh. The center of this sphere is the same as that of the galgal ha-domeh. This sphere also turns in an east to west direction. Within the galgal ha-noteh is another sphere called the galgal ha-yotze (the eccentric sphere). It is so called because the earth is not the center of this sphere. It is also called the galgal ha-noseh (the carrying sphere) because it bears a sphere which the moon circles (the galgal ha-katan or epicycle). The galgal ha-yotze turns from west to east. These spheres move at different speeds and their movements explain the complicated motions of the moon. Does a new moon start when the moon completes circling the sphere of the zodiac, i.e., every 27 days and some limited hours, 28 That is the time it takes the

moon to return to a given point in the zodiac (Weiser). Medieval man believed that beyond the spheres of the moon, sun and planets there is a sphere containing the constellations. It takes the moon 27 and about a third of a day to complete this cycle (Weiser). or when it completes circling the apogee of the eccentric sphere whose center is far from the center of the earth, 29 The time it takes the moon to complete its epicycle within the eccentric sphere, i.e., every 27 days and about 13 hours. So Cherez. However, his interpretation is questionable. or when it completes circling the sphere of the dragon according to the calculation of the wise men because its epicycle turns in the opposite direction. 30 The moon in its epicycle turns from west to east while the "sphere of the dragon" rotates from east to west (Weiser). These contrary motions must be taken into consideration in establishing the time it takes the moon to complete the latter revolution. According to Krinsky what I.E. means by "the time it takes the moon to circle the sphere of the dragon" is the time it takes the moon to return to the head of the dragon after leaving it. It should be noted that the commentaries differ as to what I.E. means by the "sphere of the dragon," as they do with regard to what he means by the moon's cycle around the apogee of the "eccentric sphere" and indeed as to how I.E. envisioned the system of the lunar spheres cited in note 27. For their opinions and differences see, Joseph ben Eliezer Ha-Sephardi, Margaliot Tuva, Amsterdam, 1722; Hayyim Wolf Kaputa, Or La-netivah, Lemberg, 1897; Weiser and Cherez. While the specifics of I.E.'s comments are difficult to unravel, as is evidenced by the wide interpretation given his comments in the above-noted commentaries, the thrust of his remarks is clear. The moon makes a number of cycles in the sky. If a new moon is to be determined by the moon's revolution, which one of its cycles is to determine the new moon? On the other hand, it may be that the month depends upon the conjunction of the sun and the moon. 31 A Hebrew month is determined by the conjunction of the sun and moon. Cf. Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Sanctification of the New Moon, 6:1. There are three such conjunctions: the mean conjunction, 32 The mean conjunction of the sun and the moon takes place every 29 days, 12 hours, and 793 parts of an hour (dividing the hour into 1,080 parts). Cf. Weiser. The mean conjunction is the time when the sun and moon would come together if both moved uniformly. the true conjunction 33 The true conjunction of the sun and moon is their actual conjunction. and the conjunction contingent on the place of the beholder. 34 The conjunction varies in different places of the globe. See I.E.'s commentary on Ex. 12:2. We do not know which conjunction determines the new moon; is it one or the other? As to that which they say, that the month begins when the new moon is actually seen, they have been deceived, for they have eyes but see not. Let them show us where in the Torah and the testimony 35 A synonym for Torah. it is stated that the new moon is to be so determined. Similarly they did not correctly comment on This is the burnt-offering of every new moon throughout the months of the year (Num. 28:14) because this verse does not mention the moon. 36 The Karaites interpreted chodesh be-chodsho to mean the moon when it is new. They claimed that be-chodsho is to be interpreted as be-chiddusho (when it is new). I.E. disagrees. He feels that be-chodsho means in its month, and furthermore, chodesh does not mean moon but month. Cf. I.E. on Num. 28:14. It merely says that the various sacrifices are to be offered in their proper time and day and the Sabbath sacrifices on the Sabbath. 37 Num. 28:10. It is also known that sometimes there are six hours between the birth of the new moon and sunset. At such times the new moon can only be seen under certain astonomical conditions. At other times there may be a thirty hour difference between them, 38 In other words, the moon will not be visible at the first sunset following its conjunction with the sun. and the moon will not be visible even to one standing on a mountain. This is so because the path of the moon changes due to its and the sun's spheres. 39

The ancients believed that the sun traveled around the earth. However, the earth was not the center of the sun's orbit. When the sun is further from the earth, it appears to be traveling more slowly, when closer to the earth, faster (Yale Judaica series, Vol. XI, p. 126). Its time of appearance also changes depending on the longitude and the latitude of the country from which it is observed. If it is cloudy and the new moon is not seen at the beginning of Elul or Tishri, shall we fast three days of atonement? 40 The point is, if we do not rely on the traditional calculation and rely on the mean conjunction, then when for some reason the moon is not seen at the beginning of Elul we do not know when that month starts. If the same occurs with regard to Tishri, we have three possible dates for Yom Kippur, viz., when did Elul start and did it have 29 or 30 days? To satisfy all doubts we would have to fast three days in a row. Furthermore, who says that a month consists of thirty days, for behold, Judah Ha-Parsi 41 Judah Ha-Parsi was a Karaite who wrote a book claiming that the Pentateuch follows a solar year of 12 months, with each month consisting of 30 days. However, the Bible nowhere says that a month consists of 30 days. Cf. I.E.'s commentary on Ex. 12:2. wrote a book in which he counted the year and the months according to a solar year. We also do not find in the Torah of Moses the law of witnesses testifying that they saw the new moon, or who is qualified to testify that he saw the new moon, or if one is permitted to walk a great distance on a holy day to testify that he saw the new moon, 42 Mishnah, Rosh Hashanah 1:5-8. or if a father and son, or proselytes, or women are fit to testify that they saw the new moon. Even if all these things were written in the Torah, another problem remains. The Torah of Moses does not state how many months make a year. And even though the Torah connects the new year with the fresh young ears 43 Cf. Ex. 12:2, 13:4. it is not clear whether it refers to the fresh young ears of the wheat 44 The month of Sivan. or barley, 45 The month of Nisan. or when during this period the new year is to start, or from where young fresh ears of barley are to be brought. 46 Assuming that the new year starts with the ripening of the barley, what place is to determine its ripening and hence the spring? The barley ripens at different times in different places. If there is a hunger in the land of Israel and its environs and there is no seed and certainly no fresh ears, what is to be done? In such a case shall we leave the year as it is or add an additional month? 47 Perhaps we ought to add another month and see if something will grow and there will be fresh young ears. Cf. Weiser. In such a year the Omer would not be counted and there would be no festival of weeks. 48 Since there is no barley. Cf. Lev. 23:9-22. Therefore all these commandments are dependent on true traditions. Those who dispute what I have said and say, do not the sages of the Mishnah also teach that the months are determined by when the new moon is seen, to them I reply that if you accept their tradition as truth, that the month is determined by the sighting of the new moon, also accept their tradition that the needs of the people also determine the new moon. For the new moon is contingent upon its announcement by the Bet Din. The Bet Din took into consideration the time of the fresh young ears, the solstice and the needs of the community 49 Cf. Sanhedrin 11b. in determining whether to add an additional month. Why, with regard to the laws of plagues, which apply only to individuals and very rarely at that, does the Torah go into such great detail? And yet with regard to the laws of the calendar, which determine the festivals that apply to all Israel at all times, there is no clear-cut statement so that we must look for hints here and there as to how the month is to be determined. Why is this so in this perfect Torah? This is ironclad proof that Moses relied in these matters on the oral Torah which is a gladness to the heart and a healing to the bones. In reality, there is no difference between the written and oral Torot. They were both handed down to us by our ancestors. The Passover observed by King Hezekiah supports our faith in

the Rabbinic tradition. It was done so on the advice of wise elders. Hezekiah did not offer the paschal lamb in its time and he presumed to eat leaven in the first month. He observed the "second Passover" for seven days, in a manner similar to the "first Passover." 50 Hezekiah put off the observance of Passover for a month upon the advice of "his princes and all the congregation in Jerusalem." Cf. II Chron. 30:2. This supports the teaching of the Oral Law to the effect that a Bet Din may delay observance of Passover for a month if it is felt that the needs of the community warrant it. Otherwise, Hezekiah would have been guilty of eating leaven on Passover. Furthermore, he would have invented a new way to celebrate the Second Passover. Cf. Num. 9:9-13. For the Second Passover is observed for one night and Hezekiah kept it for seven days. Since Hezekiah was a pious king we must assume that the festival he observed was not the Second Passover but the Passover itself after an extra month was added (intercalated) to the year. There is ample proof that the Most High and Exalted One accepted what he did. This was so because his actions were based on the ruling of a Bet Din. There was no deceit in him.

The third approach is the way of darkness and gloom. It lies outside of the circle. This is the approach of those who invent secret explanations for everything in Scripture. They believe that the laws and statutes of the Torah are riddles. 51 I.E. takes issue with those who interpret the Torah as allegories. In I.E.'s alternate commentary on the Pentateuch this group is identified as the Christians. I will not expend much time answering them for, they are a people who do err in their heart (Ps. 95:10). The fact of the matter is that the laws of the Torah do not disagree with what is right. 52 Krinsky. That is, all the laws of the Torah must make sense. They are correct in only one thing, viz., that every precept, be it minor or major, must be weighed in the scale of one's heart wherein the Eternal has planted some of his wisdom. Thus if there appears something in the Torah that is intellectually impossible to accept or contrary to the evidence of our senses, then we must search for a hidden meaning. This is so because intelligence is the basis of the Torah. 53 Cherez. The Torah was not given to ignoramuses. Man's intelligence is the angel which mediates between him and his God. Thus anything in the Torah which does not contradict reason we must explain literally, take as it is written, and believe that it is so. We should not grope walls as the blind do, and interpret verses according to our subjective needs. Why should we turn what is evident into mysteries? Now if there are places with two meanings both of which are clearly true, one referring to the body and the other to the mind such as "circumcision of the flesh," 54 Gen. 17:11. and "uncircumcised of heart," 55 Deut. 10:16. The point is the reason the flesh is circumcised is so that it will serve as a reminder to the Jew that there is a God above to whom he must submit. Thus the circumcision of the flesh serves as a reminder that one is to circumcise one's heart. Now although this reason for the commandment of circumcision is (in the opinion of I.E.) self-evident it in no way negates the literal meaning of this law (Cherez). I.E. is vague. For additional interpretations see Weiser and Meijler. and if there is a secret meaning to the tree of life, they are to be taken literally as well. 56 Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 3:24. Now if anyone cannot accept what I have said, if he be wise let him open his eyes. In nature, too, we find things that serve more than one purpose, such as the nostrils, the tongue, and the legs that serve two purposes. 57 Hence a verse or a law may have a literal as well as a secret meaning.

The fourth approach is close to the point, and a group of commentators have pursued it. This is the method adopted by the scholars in the land of the Greeks and Romans. 58 The Christian world in contradistinction to those living in the Moslem world. They do not rely on grammar but rather on Midrashic exegesis as do the books Lekah Tov 59 A "Midrashic

commentary to the Pentateuch and the five scrolls composed by R. Tobiah ben Eliezer of Castoria (Bulgaria) in the 11th century." (Standard Jewish Encyclopedia, N.Y., 1966.) and Or Enayim. 60 A Midrash composed by R. Meir of Castoria. R. Meir was a student of R. Tobiah ben Eliezer. Since the interpretations quoted in these works are already found in the books of the ancients, why do these later interpreters tire us by writing them again? 61 These books merely quote earlier Midrashic material. Weiser explains that I.E. was upset with these books because they kept people from comprehending the literal meaning of the text and from learning how to analyze the Bible from a grammatical point of view. There are Midrashic interpretations that are, in reality, in keeping with the literal meaning of the text. 62 Weiser. An alternate interpretation is: there are Midrashim which contradict each other. There are other Midrashim that are not to be taken literally, they have a secret meaning, an example being the Midrash to the effect that the Torah pre-dated the world by two thousand years. This Midrash is true only according to its secret meaning. However, many do not understand it so. Actually, it is impossible to take this Midrashic statement literally because a year is made up of a given number of days, and the measure of the minute and the day is contingent upon the motion of the sphere. 63 Medieval man believed that the earth is surrounded by a sphere, in which the sun, moon, planets and stars are embedded. Without these spheres and their contents there can be no time, for time is made up of minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years (cf. I.E.'s alternate introduction). Hence if there is no sphere there is no day, certainly not two days or a year or two thousand years. If one were to ask, 64 This question is implied by anyone who takes literally the statement that the Torah existed two thousand years before the creation of the world. what was the world like before creation, would he not be ashamed of himself for seeking an entity when as yet there was nothing in existence? Those who respond 65 That is, they respond to I.E.'s insistence that the Rabbinic statement under discussion cannot be taken literally by saying: it can because there were other worlds in existence prior to this one. by saying that God created other worlds before this one and that he created this world at a propitious time 66 Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 3, "Rabbi Judah bar Simon said, 'Scripture states and there was evening' (Gen. 1:5), this teaches that there was time before this…Rabbi Abahu said, 'God created worlds and destroyed them until he created this one…'" are offering an answer based on the plummet of emptiness (Is. 34:11). Similarly those who say that the Almighty brought the world into existence to show his might to man, the object of creation, have satisfied themselves with a miserable answer which takes into consideration only part of a larger problem. There is clear proof to all but the blind that only one-twelfth of the earth is inhabited. Furthermore, the entire earth is an insignificant dot in relation to the sphere over it 67 The reference is to the lunar sphere which surrounds the earth (Cherez, Krinsky). The point is how can one maintain that man is the object of creation when he and the whole earth are insignificant dots in the universe. and even less so to the uppermost sphere. The interpretation of yom yom (daily) (Prov. 8:30) as meaning two thousand years is also wrong from a purely exegetical point of view. 68 The Midrash states, "The Torah preceded the existence of the earth by two thousand years, this is what Scripture means by, Then I was by Him, as a nursling; And I was daily (yom yom) all delight, Playing always before Him (Prov. 8:30). Now a day of God consists of one thousand years, as it is written, For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday (yom etmol) (Ps. 90:4)." Hence yom yom means that the Torah was God's delight for two thousand years (Bereshit Rabbah, 8:2). If the meaning of yom yom (day) was two thousand years, Scripture would have read: yomayim (two days) rather than yom yom (daily). This is so because the meaning of yom yom is daily. We similarly read, ish ish (what man soever) (Lev. 17:3)

and Blessed be the Lord day by day (yom yom) (Ps. 68:20). Furthermore, the end of the verse Playing always before him proves the point. 69 Playing always means the same as yom yom ; hence yom yom means daily not two thousand. Additionally, Proverbs goes on to say, Happy is the man, that hearkeneth to me, Watching daily (yom yom) at my gates (Prov. 8:34). Now, if yom yom means two thousand years then it follows that we should observe the true Torah for two thousand years. 70 If yom yom means two thousand years then Prov. 8:34 reads: Happy is the man that hearkeneth to me, watching for two thousand years at my gates, i.e., observing the Torah for two thousand years. Since no one lives that long what purpose is there for Scripture to make such a statement? Hence yom yom cannot mean two thousand years. Furthermore, the verse For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday (Ps. 90:4) speaks of man not of God. 71 See note 68. I.E. disagrees with the rabbis who interpret Thy sight as God's sight. According to I.E. Thy sight refers to man's sight. Those who are interested in the interpretation of this verse will find it in my commentary on Psalms.

There are also Midrashim whose main purpose is to relieve the mind tired by the study of a difficult and intricate halakhah. 72 When the sages wanted to relieve their minds they engaged in fanciful Midrashim (Cherez). Cf. Sabbath 30b. Other Midrashim are based upon well-known concepts. There are also Midrashim that are not according to halakhah. There are some Midrashim whose main purpose is to enlighten others. 73 The composer of the Midrash knew the literal meaning of the verse. However, the literal meaning was beyond the comprehension of his audience; hence he composed a homiletic interpretation. These Midrashim explain the Torah to the young. There is a bird that cannot see on sunny days and is able to see only at night because its eyes are dim. 74 Similarly there are people who cannot be told the literal truth. Among the Midrashim that are for the young is the one that says that the Torah opens with a bet because the word berakhah (blessing) opens with a bet. Now, the fact is that there are many curses that open with a bet, viz., Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty (bokek) and maketh it waste (bolekah) (Is. 24:1); And I will lay it waste (batah) (Is. 5:6); And the grinders cease (batelu) (Eccles. 12:3); And as for his ordinances, they have not known them (ba'al-yeda'um) (Ps. 147:20); From the pit of corruption (beli) (Is. 38:17); Your clothes are not waxen old (balu) (Deut. 29:4); The Lord hath swallowed up (billa) (Lam. 2:2); The Lord did there confound (balal) (Gen. 11:9); and thrust thee through (bittekukh) (Ezek. 16:40); and despatch them (bare) them with their swords (Ezek. 23:47); between the parts thereof (betarav) (Jer. 34:18); contempt (bizzayon) and wrath (Es. 1:18); bring forth for terror (behalah) (Is. 65:23); I will make thee a terror (ballahot) (Ezek. 26:21); a base fellow (beliyya'al) (II Sam. 20:1); Baal-peor (Deut. 4:3); Bel boweth down (Is. 46:1); priests of the high places (bamot) (I Kings 13:33).

As to the resh, 75 There either was a Midrash which interpreted the resh this way, or I.E. points it out, should one so wish to interpret the resh. if it stands for head as in its head (resheh) was of fine gold ((Dan. 2:32), it can also stand for evil (ra) as in the wicked men (ra) and base fellows (I Sam. 30:22).

Anyone with a little bit of intelligence and certainly one who has knowledge of the Torah can create his own Midrashim. The Midrashic interpretations are like clothes to the naked body. 76 The body remains unchanged regardless of one's dress. Concerning such interpretations our sages of blessed memory said, a verse never loses its literal meaning. 77 Sabbath 63a.

One Midrash 78 I.E. offers examples of a word being "dressed" in various garments. interprets the word bereshit to mean that God created the world through the Torah, as it is written, The Lord made me as the beginning (reshit) of His way (Prov. 8:22). 79 Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 1:2, God looked

into the Torah and created the world. Another Midrash states that the world was created upon the leviathan, as it is written, He is the beginning (reshit) of the ways of God (Job. 40:19). Another Midrash states that the world was created so that God might be feared, as it is written, The fear of the Lord is the beginning (reshit) of wisdom (Ps. 111:10). Another Midrash states that the world was created because of the bikkurim (first fruits), as it is written, The choicest (reshit) first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God (Ex. 23:19).

Another Midrash asks, why does the Torah open with a bet? To teach that God is one. It is only His creation that has two (bet) aspects, i.e., matter and form. 80 In other words, prior to creation there was only the One ; after creation there came into being something with two aspects. The word bet also serve as the number two. Another Midrashic reason given for the Torah opening with a bet is that the bet alludes to the two worlds. 81 The earth and the eternal world. Another Midrash asks, why does the Torah open with a bet followed by resh, alef, shin and finally by yod tav? It answers that Scripture teaches that the first Temple, which preceded the creation of heaven and earth, 82 Cf. Pesachim 54a. will stand for 410 years and then be destroyed. 83 The interpretation is as follows: bet stands for bayit (the Temple), resh, alef, shin stands for rishon (first). Tav is numerically equivalent to 400 and yod to 10, hence, the interpretation: the bayit rishon (first Temple) will stand for 410 years. The Bible continues, Now the earth was unformed and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep (v. 2). This means that darkness descended upon the earth following the removal of the Divine presence from the earth. 84 When the Temple was destroyed. However, all was not lost, for (and) the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters (v. 2); i.e., the spirit of wisdom and understanding rested on the expounders of the Torah which is likened to water. 85 The Tikune Zohar 30 reads, “What does, and the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters, mean? Without a doubt it means that when the Shikhinah went into exile God’s spirit hovered over those who study the Torah.” Ultimately God will say, Let there be light (v. 3); i.e., the Messianic age will come. At that time God will separate those who hope for the Lord’s salvation and those who do evil deeds in the dark. 86 This is the meaning of And God divided the light from the darkness, etc. (v. 4).

Another Midrash interprets bereshit to be two words that mean that everything was created out of fire which is the foundation of all. 87 The Midrash apparently rearranges the word bereshit as berit esh, a covenant of fire. Cf. Weiser and Cherez. See also Tikune Zohar 22, which similarly interprets bereshit. Another Midrash states that bereshit alludes to six, as in six (shit) cubits (Dan. 3:1). 88 The Midrash breaks up bereshit as follows: bara (he created) shit (six). The six allude to the six compass points of every body. The numerical value of first letters of each word in the first verse of the Torah comes to 22. This alludes to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Similarly the seven letters in this verse allude to the seven vowels or to the seven planets. 89 Literally, the seven moving stars. They are: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon. The first verse of the Torah has 28 letters corresponding to the 28 phases of the moon. The same is the case with the 28 “times” mentioned in Kohelet (Eccles. 3:2 and 8).

The Midrash also states that Genesis opens with a bet and closes with a mem 90 The bet in Gen. 1:1, bereshit ; the mem in Gen. 50:26, mitzrayim. Mem bet is numerically equivalent to 42. because it alludes to the name of God 91 Maimonides in Chap. 1:62 of the Guide for the Perplexed writes, “There was also a name (of God) of 42 letters known among them. Every intelligent person knows that one word of 42 letters is impossible. But it was a phrase of several words which totaled 42 letters.” enunciated by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. The name was revealed to Moses

at Sinai, as it is written, The Lord is among them (bam), 92 Bam (bet mem) is numerically equivalent to 42. as in Sinai, in holiness (Ps. 68:18). Another Midrash says that the Torah opens with In the beginning and closes with the word Israel because Israel was on God's mind at the time of creation. 93 "In the beginning…Israel," cf. Bereshit Rabbah 1:5. The end of the matter is, there is no limit to Midrashic interpretations. The fifth method is the one upon which I will base my commentary. It appears to me to be correct in the presence of God whom alone I fear. I will not show favoritism to anyone when it comes to interpreting the Torah. 94 I.E. will take issue with accepted authorities when he feels they misinterpret the Biblical texts. I will, to the utmost of my ability, try to understand grammatically every word and then do my best to explain it. Every word whose meaning the reader desires to know will be found explained the first time the word is encountered. For example, the meaning of sky (shamayim) will be given in the first verse of Genesis. This will apply to all terms. I will not make mention of the reasons offered by the Massorites 95 "The commentators who sought to explain the cause of the deviations from normal orthography." (M. Friedlander, Ibn Ezra Literature, Vol. III, London, 1877). as to why certain words are at times spelled full and at other times defectively because all of their reasons are of a Midrashic nature. The fact is that Scripture sometimes fully and clearly spells out a word and at other times omits an unpronounced letter for the sake of brevity. Since the Massorites claim to be able to explain the reasons for full and defective spellings, let them tell us what spelling the scribes should have used in writing Scripture. 96 This interpretation is based on the reading in Vat. Ebr. 38. Now Moses left out the vav of yimlokh (shall reign) in The Lord shall reign (yimlokh) (Ex. 15:18), whereas the editors of Proverbs spelled the word yimlokh with a vav in For a servant when he reigned (yimlokh) (Prov. 30:22). However, many years passed between Moses and the editors of Proverbs. 97 The point being that one cannot expect consistency over such a long period. Actually, the reason given by the Massorites for the different spellings of the same word are for children. I would also add that one who correctly interprets the Torah does not need to assume any scribal emendations. 98 See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 18:13. It should also be noted that the Aramaic translation of the Torah accurately rendered the meaning of the Pentateuch and explained to us all its difficult parts. Now if at times he (the Aramaic translator, Onkelos) followed the Midrashim, 99 The point is that Onkelos occasionally offers a Midrashic interpretation of a verse whose meaning is obvious. He does so to offer additional meanings to the text. In these instances no harm is done since the plain meaning is obvious. although he knew the basics better than we, he did so in order to offer additional meanings to a given text where even the simple could grasp the plain meaning of the text. 100 In such cases there is no chance of even a simpleton misunderstanding the literal meaning of a verse which Onkelos interprets Midrashically. Thus he renders iroh (Gen. 49:11) not as foal but as his city, and beni (colt) as will build. He also renders atono (his ass's colt) (Ibid.) as "the gate of the entrance" (sha'ar ha-iton). 101 Cf. Ezek. 40:15. Onkelos renders Binding his foal (iroh) unto the vine, And his ass's colt (beni atono) unto the choice vine as, Israel (the vine) will go round about His city (Jerusalem). Israel (the choice vine) will build (beni) His Temple (atono, connecting atono with sha'ar ha-iton in Ezek. 40:15). No harm was done by this because the literal meaning of a verse is never negated by Midrashic interpretations for there are 70 faces to the Torah. However, with regard to verses which deal with laws, statutes and regulations, if we find two possible interpretations for a verse and one of them is in keeping with the interpretation of the transmitters of tradition, 102 The Rabbinic sages. all of whom were righteous men, then without reservation and with all our might we will

rely on the truth of their words. 103 The point is, when the Rabbinic interpretation is in keeping with the meaning of the verse it must be accepted even if it is possible to interpret the verse differently. As to those instances where the Rabbinic interpretation contradicts the plain meaning of a verse, see I.E.'s comments on Gen. 1:26 and the notes thereto. Heaven forbid that we should join the Sadducees who claim that the traditions of the Rabbinic sages contradict the literal meaning of Scripture and the rules of grammar. The fact of the matter is that our ancient sages are true and all their words are true. May the Lord God of truth lead his servant in the way of truth.

Chapter 1

Verse 1

IN THE BEGINNING. Our wise men 1 The Hebrew grammarians. See Ibn Janah, Sefer ha-Rikmah, 6:2. taught that the letter bet (of bereshit, in the beginning) is superfluous. 2 The letter bet placed before the word reshit has no translatable meaning. According to Weiser it is there for emphasis. Our verse should thus be rendered: First God created heaven and earth. They compare it to the bet in the word ba-rishonah (at the first) (Genesis 13:4). We know the bet in ba-rishonah to be superfluous for we find they shall set forth first (rishonah) (Numbers 2:9). 3 According to this opinion rishonah and ba-rishonah mean the same. Hence the bet of ba-rishonah is superfluous. However, if this were so the bet (of bereshit) would be vocalized with a long kamatz. 4 As is the bet of ba-rishonah. The fact that the bet of bereshit is vocalized with a sheva proves that both cases are not exactly the same. Other scholars maintain that the word bereshit is always in the construct and its meaning in our verse is: "In the beginning of the evening, or of the night, or of the darkness." 5 The word or phrase that bereshit is connected to is missing and must be supplied by the reader. According to Cherez, I.E. is trying to explain why the superfluous bet of bereshit is vocalized with a sheva while that of ba-rishonah is vocalized with a kamatz. The reason is that bereshit is in the construct and therefore is vocalized with a sheva. However, they have overlooked And he chose a first part (reshit) for himself (Deuteronomy 33:21). 6 Where the word reshit is in the absolute. Others say that the bet of bereshit is a preposition. 7 The Hebrew texts printed in our editions are most probably incorrect. We have followed Vat. Ebr. 38, which has kli ta'am rather than bli ta'am. For alternate interpretations see Filwarg, Weiser and Cherez. They explain that Scripture intends to preclude the thought that heaven and earth were preexisting. Hence it states, In the beginning. 8 The bet is there for emphasis. The meaning of the verse is: In the beginning, i.e., before anything was created, God created heaven and earth. I believe that bereshit is in the construct, as in In the beginning of (bereshit) the reign of Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 26:1). 9 I.E. agrees that bereshit is in the construct. He disagrees with the earlier quoted opinion only in maintaining that it is not always in the construct. Don't ask, how can a word in the construct be connected to a verb in the perfect. 10 A noun is usually in the construct when connected to another noun, hence I.E.'s comment. This presents no problem, for we find that very case in the verse When the Lord spoke at first with Hosea (Hosea 1:2), 11 Techillat (at first) is in the construct with dibber (spoke). and in the verse the

city where David encamped (Isaiah 29:1). 12 Kiryat (the city) is in the construct with chanah (encamped). The meaning of bereshit will be explained in our comments on the next verse. 13 That is, the explanation of what bereshit in the construct is to be connected to.
CREATED. Most Biblical commentators explain that the word bara (created) indicates creation ex nihilo. But if the Lord make (yivra) a new thing (beri'ah) (Num. 16:30) is similar. However, they have overlooked And God created (va-yivra) the great sea monsters 14 God obviously did not create the sea monsters ex nihilo, for the verse concludes, and every living creature that creepeth, wherewith the waters swarmed, which shows that the sea monsters were created out of the water. Also, it is absurd to assume that on the fifth day of creation God would create sea monsters ex nihilo. (Gen. 1:21) and the three times the word created is used in one verse, viz., And God created (va-yivra) man in His own image, in the image of God created (bara) He him; male and female created (bara) He them (Gen. 1:27). They also failed to consider I form the light, and create darkness (Is. 45:7) wherein darkness, which is the opposite of light, an existing entity, is described by the prophet as being created. 15 Darkness is the absence of light. Thus Isaiah uses the term created in the opposite sense of creation ex nihilo. In Isaiah it means the creation of nothing out of something (Krinsky). Hence bara does not necessarily imply creation ex nihilo. The following is the precise explanation of the word bara. Bara has two meanings, one of which has been noted above. 16 That is, to create or make. The second 17 That is, to eat. is found in the verse neither did he eat (bara) bread with them (II Samuel 12:17). However, in the latter case, an alef has been substituted for a heh. 18 Most of our manuscripts of the Bible have barah with a heh. However, Ibn Ezra's manuscript must have had bara with an alef. See also Jacob ben Haim's edition of the Hebrew Bible, 1524, which has the same reading as Ibn Ezra. There is some difficulty in understanding this comment as the printed text is corrupt. We have followed Vat. Ebr. 38 as suggested by Weiser. For a different rendering see Filwarg. The reason is that bara (in I Sam. 12:17) is similar to le-havrot (to urge to eat) in And all the people came to cause David to eat (le-havrot) bread (II Sam. 3:35). The verb le-havrot appears in the hifil (and its root ends with heh), for if it ended with an alef, Scripture would have read le-havri, as in to make yourselves fat (le-havri'achem) with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel (I Sam. 2:29). We also find bara conjugated in the pi'el, as in and cut down (u-vereta) for thyself (trees) (Joshua 17:15). This is not like the similar word beru in choose (beru) you a man for you (I Sam. 17:8) but rather like bare (hack, dispatch) in and dispatch them (u-vare) with their swords 19 Ibn Janah, The Book of Roots, root bet, resh, alef, explains bara in Josh. 17:15 to mean chose, as in I Sam. 17:8. Ibn Ezra disagrees. The point of I.E's comment is that bara spelled bet, resh, alef primarily means to cut. It is encountered with this meaning in both the kal and pi'el. Bara also means to eat. However, in the latter case its root is bet, resh, heh, although it is found spelled bet, resh, alef in I Sam. 17:8. In the latter instance, however, we treat it as if there were an interchange between the heh and alef. (Ezekiel 23:47). The meaning of bara is to cut or to set a boundary. The intelligent person will understand what I am alluding to. 20 I. Husik, A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy, p. 190, notes, "The Hebrew word bara, ordinarily translated "created," which implies to most people the idea of creatio ex nihilo, Ibn Ezra renders, in accordance with its etymology, to limit, to define, by drawing or incising a line or boundary. Having said this, Ibn Ezra, in his wonted mysterious manner, stops short, refusing to say more, and preferring to mystify the reader by adding the tantalizing phrase, 'The intelligent will understand.' He means apparently to indicate that an eternal matter was endowed with form." Nahman Krochmal, More Nevuche Ha-zeman (quoted by Krinsky), suggests that Ibn Ezra's belief is similar

to that of the Kabbalists; i.e., the world was created out of an emanation from God. See also C. Sirot, Philosophy in the Middle Ages (Hebrew), p. 112. Ibn Ezra was a neo-Platonist. According to neo-Platonism the world came about by emanation from God. Ibn Ezra is apparently saying that at the creation spoken of in the first chapter of Genesis, God gave final form to what had previously emanated from Him. GOD. Elohim (God) is a plural. We know this because we come across the singular form Elo'ah. 21 Ps. 114:7. Elo'ah being the singular of Elohim. Elohim is employed stylistically. Every language has honorific terminology. In the non-Hebrew tongues when an inferior addresses a superior he employs the plural. In Arabic it is customary for a dignitary such as a king to speak in the plural. In Hebrew, too, it is considered a sign of dignity to employ the plural when speaking of a superior. Such is the case with the words adonim (lords) and be'alim (owners). Thus Scripture says, a cruel lord (adonim) (Is. 19:4), 22 Adonim is a plural, yet its meaning in this verse is singular (lord). The singular of adonim is adon. and and the owner thereof (be'alav) shall accept it (Exodus 22:10). 23 Be'alav literally means, its owners. The terms alav (upon him), elav (to him), and adav (unto him) are similar. 24 All of these words have plural endings, yet are used to indicate singulars. It is for this reason that Scipture reads bara Elohim and not bare'u Elohim. 25 Since Elohim is to be understood as singular, the verb following it (bara) is in the singular. If Elohim were plural, the verb following it would also be plural (bare'u). We know from the study of logic that speech is called safah 26 Safah is the Hebrew word for lip. The point is that more than the lips are involved in speech, but speech is so called because it is seen to come from the lips. because it is seen to come from the lips. Similarly man's highest soul is called heart (lev) even though the soul itself is incorporeal while the heart is corporeal. It is referred to in this manner because the heart is its first resting place. Similarly God is called Elohim because His actions are executed via angels who do His will and who are referred to as Elohim. 27 Man's soul is often referred to in Scripture as lev because the soul acts via the heart. Similarly God is called Elohim because He acts via the angels. Husik, p. 191, points out that according to I.E., "God cannot come in contact with the material and changeable (hence)…it follows that (the terrestrial world)…was not made directly by him, but by angels; hence the word Elohim is used in the first chapter of Genesis, which means primarily the angels, and secondarily God as acting through the angels." I will explain part of the secret of God's name when I comment on for My name is in him (Ex. 23:21). Pay no heed to the opinion of Rabbi Saadiah Gaon who holds that man is superior to the angels. I have already explained to you in The Book of Foundation that all of his proofs are wrong. We know that the prophets are the most exalted human beings. Nevertheless, the prophet Joshua fell upon his face and prostrated himself before God's angel and said to him, What saith my lord unto his servant (Josh. 5:14). 28 Joshua's bowing before God's angels proves that angels are superior to prophets. The same is true of the prophets Zechariah and Daniel. 29 Both address the angels as superiors. See Zechariah 1:9 and Dan. 10:17. Why should I elaborate when this point is so elementary?The meaning of Lord of Hosts (Elohe ha-tzeva'ot) is the same as God of gods (Elohe ha-Elohim) (Deut. 10:17). 30 We thus see that Elohim means the same as tzeva'ot (hosts or angels). The definition of elohim (lord) is angels. 31 Reading malakh (angel) rather than melekh (king) (Weiser). People engaged in the dispensation of God's justice are also called elohim. 32 According to Rabbinic interpretation Elohim at times signifies a judge. See Mekhilta on Ex. 21:6. Elohim is an adjective, not a proper noun. 33 Hence it can be declined and be in the construct. A proper noun cannot. I.E. seems to limit the term noun to proper nouns. Apparently common nouns were treated like adjectives. It is

not found conjugated in the perfect or imperfect. 34 Hebrew adjectives have verbal forms. However, Elohim is never found in the verbal form. Nevertheless, Ibn Ezra insists that it is an adjective. One should not assume that angels are composed of fire and air because Scripture states, Who makest winds Thy messengers, The flaming fire Thy ministers (Psalms 104:4). 35 Which implies that God makes his angels out of wind. This is not the literal meaning of this verse. David (in Psalm 104) speaks first of creation. He starts with light and says, Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment (Ps. 104:2). He then goes on to say, Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain, heaven referring to the firmament upon which is water, fire, snow and wind. David next says that the wind serves as God's agent; i.e., it goes wherever God sends it. He speaks in a similar vein of fire as one of God's ministers. 36 Psalm 104. It is not to be taken as implying that the angels are made out of fire. It rather means that fire is God's agent. Cf. Ibn Ezra on Ps. 104:4. David then says, Who didst establish the earth upon its foundations (Ps. 104:5), which refers to dry land. Similarly it is written, Stormy wind, fulfilling His word (Ps. 148:8). 37 Which shows that the wind is God's agent. Krinsky suggests that this quote is misplaced and should follow, "it (the winds) goes wherever God sends it."

Et indicates the very thing. It signifies the direct object, as in the heaven (et ha-shamayim). 38 Gen. 1:1. The word et is a most difficult word to translate because it has many different meanings, depending on the context. However, sometimes it is omitted, as in that God created man (Deut. 4:32). It is also found placed before the subject, as in and when there came a lion, or (ve-et) a bear (I Sam. 17:34). However, the latter usage is very rare. Furthermore, et is used in place of with or from. 39 Cf. Ex. 2:21; 9:29.

THE HEAVEN. The definite article (ha) is placed before heaven (shamayim) to indicate that Scripture speaks of the heaven visible to man. 40 That is, the firmament. According to I.E. there is a heaven above the firmament which is invisible to man. This heaven is eternal. It contains the spheres in which the planets and constellations are embodied. Above this heaven is the abode of the angels. Cf. Husik, p. 190. Heaven (shamayim) is always written in the plural. 41 The word shamayim (heaven) is a plural. It is possible that its dominion in Knowest thou the ordinances of the heavens? Canst thou establish its dominion over the earth? 42 In this verse its dominion is in the singular. Since shamayim is a plural, we would expect "their dominion" rather than "its dominion." (Job 38:33) refers to the dominion exercised by each one of the heavenly spheres. 43 See note 40 above. See also Ibn Ezra's Introduction, page XVII, second paragraph. The meaning of shamayim (heaven) is high and above, as it is in Arabic, a language akin in form to Hebrew. There is also a heaven of heavens. 44 Cf. Ps. 148:4. Scripture in our chapter speaks of the visible heaven. However, in Psalm 148 it speaks of the "heaven of heavens." The heaven of heavens is the spheres (Krinsky). See note 40. The word for heaven (shamayim) is never written in the singular. 45 Even if the reference is to one of the heavens. It is like the words millstone (rechayim) and noon (tzohorayim). Those who are well-versed in geometry will understand these secrets. 46 They will understand the reference to the heaven of heavens. Saadiah Gaon says that the earth may be compared to a point and the heaven to a thread circling it. Since Scripture tells us that heaven and earth were created, we deduce from this that all their contents, such as fire and water, were also created. 47 Scripture does not explicitly mention the creation of fire and water, two of the four elements. However, according to Saadiah the creation of these two elements is implied. There was no need for Scripture to mention their creation as their creation is self evident. For how could the fire and water, which filled the void between heaven and earth, be in existence before the creation of their container? Cf.

I.E.’s alternate commentary on this verse in Weiser, p. 145. Others say that the earth includes water and the heaven air. 48 Hence Scripture does state that these two elements were created. However, in my opinion the heaven and earth spoken of in our verse refer only to the firmament and the dry land. 49 Gen. 1:1 does not tell us that God created heaven and earth on the first day; neither does it deal with the creation of matter. I.E. will explain the meaning of this verse later on in his comments. For only one thing was created on each day. Thus light was created on the first day, the firmament on the second, plants on the third, luminaries on the fourth, and living creatures on the fifth and the sixth. This interpretation is borne out by the psalm quoted above (Psalm 104). It is impossible to maintain that the line circling the dot was created before the dot, or the dot before the circle. Hence our sages say that heaven and earth were created simultaneously. 50 Hagigah 12a. They offer as proof of their viewpoint, Yea, My hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, And My right hand hath spread out the heavens; When I call unto them, They stand up together (Is. 48:13). 51 They stand up together implies that they were created simultaneously. However, this proof is questionable. The plain meaning of this verse is not so, for how could God address that which was not yet created? 52 How can the Bible say, “When I call unto them,” if they were not yet in being? How could He call to that which was in a chaotic state? The explanation of this verse is as follows: I, God, created heaven and earth. When I call them, they stand before Me as servants ready to do My will. The meaning of this verse is similar to that of Thy word standeth fast in heaven (Ps. 119:89). After stating this the Psalmist makes mention of the earth (Ps. 119:90). He then goes on to say that heaven and earth stand ready to execute any commands that God will direct to them (Ps. 119:91).

Verse 2

NOW THE EARTH. The word ha-aretz (the earth) is irregular in that it is always vocalized with a kamatz beneath both the heh and the alef. 53 That is, the word eretz (earth) is vocalized aretz when preceded by the definite article. The normal vocalization should be ha-eretz, with a segol beneath the alef. It is unlike the word ha-elef (the thousand) in Thou, O Solomon, shall have the thousand (ha-elef) (Canticles 8:12); or ha-even (the stone) in and this stone (ha-even) (Gen. 28:22). 54 In elef and even the segol remains in place even when preceded by the definite article.
UNFORMED. Saadiah Gaon claims that the word tohu (unformed) is a derivative of tehom (the deep). This explanation is incorrect because the mem of tehom is a root letter 55 Hence the mem would not fall out. Thus tohu cannot derive from tehom. like the mem of hadom (footstool). 56 The mem of tehom is similar to the mem of hadom. Both mems are integral parts of the respective words and do not drop out. The Sefer Yetzirah explains tohu (unformed) and bohu (void) as follows: Tohu refers to the green line ; bohu alludes to the smooth stones. 57 Cf. Hagigah 12a. “ Tohu is a green band which encompasses the whole world, out of which darkness proceeds…, and tohu consists of the smooth stones in the abyss, out of which the waters proceed.” However, the correct meaning of these terms is found in the Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch. 58 That is, Onkelos. The latter renders these terms as “waste and empty.” We similarly read, And in the waste (tohu), a howling wilderness (Deut. 32:10), and go after vain things (tohu) (I Sam. 12:21), which means worshipping things that have no substance. 59 That is, idols.
[VOID.] Bohu is a synonym of tohu. The vavs of tohu and bohu are in place of a heh. They are like the vav in (va-yishtachu) (and he bowed) 60 The final vav of va-yishtachu (and he bowed) is in place of a heh. and the vav of achu (reed-grass) in They fed in the reed-grass (achu) (Gen.

41:2). 61 The final vav of achu (reed grass) is in place of a heh. The meaning of our verses is this: When the creation of the firmament and the dry land took place, the earth was uninhabited because it was covered with water. God created the earth in such a way that by the laws of nature it would be below the waters. 62 Earth is the heaviest and water is the second heaviest of the four elements. Hence according to the laws of nature earth has the lowest position and water the next lowest. Thus at the beginning of creation the earth was covered with water. It took a special act of God to dry the land. Do not reject this interpretation because of the vav that is placed before the words the earth (ve-ha-aretz), for its meaning is identical to that of the Arabic fa. 63 The vav of ve-ha'aretz (and the earth) introduces a new idea. This contradicts I.E.'s assertion that verse 2 is a mere continuation of verse 1, for I.E. interprets verse 1 and 2 as reading: When God made heaven and earth the earth was unformed and void. I.E. thus explains that the vav does not always mean "and" (it is like the Arabic fa). Thus verse 2 reads: the earth was, rather than: and the earth was. The vav placed before the word mist (ed) in but there went up a mist (ve-ed) from the earth (Gen. 2:6) 64 The vav of ve-ed does not mean "and a mist." is analogous. Our verses are to be so interpreted because Moses did not speak of the eternal world, which is the world of the angels; he spoke only of the transient world. 65 There were those who explained the sky in Gen. 1:1 as referring to heaven. Cf. Hagigah 12a; note 40 above. I.E. disagrees. He maintains that heaven in verse 1 refers only to the firmament. How can those who say that the word heaven in the first verse refers to the highest heavens explain the presence of the earth in the same verse? 66 If shamayim does not refer to the firmament but rather to the abode of the heavenly beings, what, then, does earth refer to? It is illogical to assume that the Bible juxtaposes the creation of the eternal with the creation of the transient. Intelligent people have reputable proof that there is only one earth. 67 Perhaps one will argue that earth refers to some spiritual earth, hence I.E.'s argument that unlike the heavens there is only one earth. As to the Midrash, when it says that there are seven earths it means that the area of the world inhabited by human beings is divided into seven sections. 68 The Midrash is not to be taken literally. The seven earths are mentioned in Zohar Chadash 1:216. The Holy Temple was in the center of the inhabited world. 69 According to the Midrash the Temple was in the center of the world. Cf. Midrash Tehillim 48:2. Here too world means the inhabitable world and not the globe. It was not in the center of the earth because we know that it was far from there.

AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD. Ru'ach (wind) is in the construct with Elohim (God) because it was the medium employed by God to dry the land. 70 I.E. renders ru'ach (spirit) as wind. Thus ve-ru'ach Elohim (and the spirit of God) means: and God's wind.

[THE WATERS.] Mayim (waters) is in the plural. It does not come in a singular form. It belongs to the dual forms, 71 Certain Hebrew words are found only in the dual forms, e.g., noon (tzohorayim), heaven (shamayim), ears (oznayim), hands (yadayim), legs (raglayim). the latter being either masculine or feminine. 72 Most of the words in dual form are feminine. However, I.E. points out that this is not necessarily so. Waters is in the masculine. A masculine noun may also come in the dual form (Filwarg). For an alternate interpretation see Krinsky. Mayim is also found used in the singular in the water of sprinkling was not dashed against him (Num. 19:13). 73 Strictly speaking, if mayim is in the plural, the verb pertaining to it should also be in the plural. Hence, rather than "was not," one would expect "were not."

[HOVERED.] Merachefet (hovered) means "blowing above the waters." As an eagle…Hovereth (yerachef) over her young (Deut. 32:11), is similar.

Verse 3

AND GOD SAID. Saadiah Gaon interprets va-yomer Elohim (and God said), as and God wanted. However, if this were the case Scripture should have stated God wanted (said) light to be. Therefore va-yomer Elohim is to be rendered "and God said." 74 If va-yomer Elohim means God wanted, rather than God said, Scripture should have used the infinite li-heyot in place of yehi ; Let there be implies a statement. We similarly read, By the word of the Lord were the heavens made (Ps. 33:6), and For He commanded, and they were created (Ps. 148:5). 75 Here creation is described as coming about by God's word. The terms used are: spoke and command. It is absurd to translate these two words as wanted. Scripture describes creation as coming about by God's word because it wants to teach us that heaven and earth came into being without any labor on God's part. We may compare this to a king assigning certain tasks to his servants.
[LIGHT.] The light spoken of in this verse was above the air. 76 See note 88.

Verse 4

AND GOD SAW THE LIGHT. "Saw" is to be understood here as perceived. Compare, Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly (Ecclesiastes 2:13). 77 I.E's proof text may be Dan. 10:7, viz., And I Daniel alone saw the vision. I.E. reads, and I saw.
The meaning of divided is: He divided them by naming one, day and the other, night. 78 God divided light from darkness by giving each a name. This verse doesn't speak of a physical division. Thus verse 5 explains how God divided the light from the darkness (Filwarg).

Verse 5

AND GOD CALLED. The heh of laylah (night) is superfluous, because the word is penultimately accented. It is always a masculine noun. 79 If the heh of laylah (night) was an essential part of the word, laylah would be a feminine noun and would be accented on the last syllable (Filwarg).
EVENING. Erev (evening) is close in meaning to choshekh (darkness). Erev is so called because forms are then intermingled. 80 The root of intermingle (erev) is ayin, resh, bet. The opposite of evening is called boker (morning) because one can then distinguish between various forms. 81 Bakker means to examine. Cf. Lev. 27:33. One day refers to the movement of the sphere. 82 The heavenly sphere made one revolution. The sun was not yet seen in the firmament; neither was there as yet a firmament. Hence I.E.'s comment. There is a secret meaning to the Midrashic statement to the effect that the world will exist for six thousand years. 83 Cf. Sanhedrin 97a. Once it is stated that God called the light "day," it is impossible to maintain that the evening, too, is considered part of the day. 84 I.E. takes issue with those who maintain that the evening is part of the day. According to I.E. day refers only to daylight. For the implications of this comment see Weiser.
The correct interpretation of And there was evening and there was morning, one day is that evening passed and the morning of the first day also came. If the intention of this verse is to teach that evening and morning make a day, then what is the meaning of And there was evening and there was morning, a second day (v. 8)? 85 If the intention of Scripture is to teach us that evening and morning make a day, why keep on repeating this with regard to the subsequent days? Hence Scripture is only describing what happened (Kaputa).

Verse 6

AND GOD SAID. Saadiah Gaon says things about the firmament that are not so. 86 Saadiah says that the waters are congealed on the firmament in a manner similar to the albumen of an egg. Saadiah also identifies the firmament with heaven (Krinsky). The correct interpretation of firmament (raki'a) is something spread out, as in And they did beat (va-yirakke'u) the gold into thin plates (Ex. 39:3); Then did I beat them (erka'em) (II Sam. 22:43); and similarly, And spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in (Is. 40:22). How precious are the words of he who said that the firmament begins at the point where the sun and the ocean merge. 87 Reading ketzot ha-shamayim, as in Vat. Ebr. 38, for ketzot ha-shemesh. Cf. Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer, Chap. III. The firmament is the air because when the light shone very strongly upon the earth and a wind dried off from the earth, the flame turned into the firmament. 88 I.E. apparently alludes here to "the light as the medium whereby the chaotic base elements were progressively transformed into their present form" (Levine). Fire was believed to be one of the primeval elements out of which the world was created. I.E. believed that this element "changed and became the raki'a (firmament)" (Cohen). Similarly 89 Ps. 104:2 describes the heaven (firmament) as being "stretched out like a curtain," which agrees with I.E.'s interpretation that the firmament is "something spread out." Furthermore, Psalm 104, like Gen. 1:6-10, first describes the creation of the sky and then that of the dry land. the Psalmist states, Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain; Who layest the beams of Thine upper chambers in the waters (Ps. 104:2 and 3). The Psalmist then makes mention of the clouds and the wind and the establishment of the earth. The latter is above the waters. We thus read, For He hath founded it (the earth) upon the seas (Ps. 24:2), and To Him that spread forth the earth above the waters (Ps. 136:6). Similarly whoever goes to the ocean is said to be going down. 90 For the earth is above the waters. Cf. Ps. 107:23. The meaning of (He) That calleth for the waters of the sea, And poureth them out upon the face of the earth 91 Which implies that the waters are above the earth. (Amos 5:8) is that God commands the waters of the sea to give birth to clouds, and, afterward, And (He) poureth them out upon the face of the earth.

Verse 7

AND GOD MADE. Dividing one thing from another is expressed by placing the preposition ben (between) before the first object and a lamed before the second, as in And let it divide 92 The verse literally reads: and let it divide between. the waters (ben mayim) from the waters (la-mayim) (Gen. 1:6) and between the holy (ben kodesh) and the common (le-chol) (Ezek. 44:23). It may also be expressed by placing the preposition (ben) before each one of the objects, as in our verse and divided the waters 93 The verse literally reads: and God divided between the waters. (ben ha-mayim) which were under the firmament from the waters (u-ven ha-mayim) which were above the firmament. And it is found with the word ben repeated and a lamed before the second object, as in But your iniquities have separated Between you (benekhem) and your God (le-ven elohekhem) (Is. 59:2).
[AND IT WAS SO.] This phrase is connected to the verse which follows it: When it was so, God called the firmament heaven. 94 And it was so is out of place following And God made the firmament. If he made it, then obviously it was so. Hence it does not apply to verse 7 but is connected to verse 8; viz., after the firmament came into being God called it heaven (Krinsky).

Verse 8

AND GOD CALLED. There are five things which God named because there was then no man to name them. They are: light, darkness, heaven, earth and the seas. In addition, God named man. 95 Scripture explicitly tells us that God named the Light, the Darkness, etc. I.E. points out that God also named Adam, even though this is not expressly stated in our chapter.

Verse 9

AND GOD SAID. I believe that this chapter is connected to the one preceding it 96 In the Hebrew Bible verses 6-8 and 9-13 form separate chapters. According to I.E. verse 9 does not start the account of the third day of creation, but is a continuation of verse 8. See note 99. because the firmament did not come into being until the land dried. 97 Thus land was created on the second day and not on the third day. Proof of this is Scripture's statement, In the day that the Lord God made earth (dry land) and heaven (the firmament) (Gen. 2:4). Thus they were made on the same day. The revelation of something which had previously been hidden (the land) or the gathering of something which was scattered (the water) into one place is not a creation. 98 Hence Scripture (Gen. 2:4) states, the Lord God made earth and heaven, rather than the Lord God created earth and heaven. I.E. had previously commented that only one thing was created on each day. He therefore explains that the making of the firmament and dry land on one day does not constitute the creation of two things on the same day, for the drying of the land was not a creation. The meaning of our verse is: now God had said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered. 99 And God said is to be understood as a pluperfect. Verses 8 and 9 are to be read as one verse and understood as follows: And God called the firmament heaven…for God had said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place (Cohen). There are hundreds of similar instances in the Torah. I will offer two examples from the portion of Bereshit. One is: And the Lord God planted a garden eastward, in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed (Gen. 2:8). After stating this, Scripture goes on to say, And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight (v. 9). However, God caused vegetation and trees to sprout before the creation of man. 100 According to Gen. 1:11,12, vegetation was created before man. Therefore the meaning of Gen. 2:9 is: And out of the ground the Lord God had previously made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight. The second example is when God commanded man not to eat from the tree of knowledge (Gen. 2:16). However, immediately after this it is written, And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto the man, etc. (Gen. 2:19). 101 The implication is that the beasts of the field were created after man. However, Gen. 1:25 tells us that man was created after the beasts of the field. Hence the meaning of formed in Gen. 2:19 is had formed, i.e., before creating man God had formed the beasts of the field and every fowl of the air. The meaning of formed thus is had formed. According to this interpretation it follows that And God saw that it was good (Gen. 1:10) is connected to the act of creation which took place on the second day. 102 The account describing the making of the sky and the earth concludes with Gen. 1:10, And God saw that is was good. The account of the creation which took place on the third day thus begins with And God said: Let the earth put forth grass (Gen. 1:11).
[LET…BE GATHERED.] The meaning of yikkavu is let them come together. Ve-nikvu in At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all nations shall be gathered (ve-nikvu) unto it (Jer. 3:17) is similar.

Verse 10

[SEAS.] Scripture employs the term seas (yammim) because there is no one name for the sea that surrounds all of the earth. 103 Ibn Ezra, in line with other medievalists, believed that there is one sea covering most of the earth. Thus he was faced with the problem of why Scripture doesn't say God called the gathering of the waters "sea." His guess was that the sea had different names in different places. Hence Scripture refers to it as seas. For an alternate interpretation see Filwarg.

Verse 11

AND GOD SAID. Scripture states, Let the earth put forth grass (Gen. 1:11); Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures (Gen. 1:20); Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind (Gen. 1:24). This teaches that God placed in the earth and in the water the power to bring forth these things at God's command. These are the generations (offspring) of the heaven and the earth (Gen. 2:4). 104 Filwarg. For an alternate interpretation see Krinsky.
[LET THE EARTH PUT FORTH GRASS.] Tadshe means let it put forth.
WHEREIN IS THE SEED THEREOF. Wherein the seed is in the fruit and each one produces its own kind.

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

AND GOD SAID. Yehi (let there be) is short for yiheyeh. Due to the frequency with which this term is used, it is employed before both the singular and the plural. 105 Luminaries is a plural, so Scripture should have used the plural yiheyu, rather than the singular yehi. It is also employed in Scripture with the feminine as in, If there be a damsel (yiheyeh) that is a virgin (Deut. 22:23). 106 Since damsel is a feminine, the verb tiheyeh, rather than yiheyeh (which is masculine), should have been used. I.E. points out that there is a tendency toward uniformity when a word is employed frequently.
FOR SIGNS AND FOR SEASONS. For signs, i.e., for minutes, and for seasons, i.e., for hours. For signs may also be interpreted as referring to the eclipse of the moon and the sun and also to shooting stars. The last-mentioned phenomena are to be included among the signs produced by the lights of the firmament because they are caused by the stars. This meaning of signs is like signs in And be not dismayed at the signs (omens) of heaven (Jer. 10:2). Anyone who explains the lamed of le-otot (for signs) as superfluous is mistaken. 107 I.E.'s point is that the lamed is a preposition.
AND LET THEM BE FOR SIGNS. A prominent Spanish sage 108 Ibn Janah (Krinsky). stated that the firmament is divided into eight parts, seven for the seven spheres of the seven stars and one for the constellations. 109 The eighth sphere is a sphere of the constellations. The seven "planets" are the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Each "planet" has its own sphere (Krinsky). Hence the firmament consists of eight parts. Heaven consists of the seven planets and the constellations. Thus according to the Spanish sage the firmament and heaven are identical. However, this cannot be so because we know there is no body above the sphere of the constellations. Behold, Scripture explicitly states, And God set them in the firmament of the heaven, which

clearly indicates that there is a heaven above the firmament. The heaven of heavens (Nehemiah 9:6) and To Him that rideth upon the heaven of heavens, which are of old (kedem) (Ps. 68:34) are similar. 110 The term heaven of heavens refers to the heaven above the firmament. It is I.E.'s belief that the planets and constellations are above the firmament (see note 40). Note that the word kedem in the verse quoted above does not mean east but ancient. 111 Kedem may also mean east, but not here. If the verse alluded to the eastern sky it could not refer to the heaven above the firmament (the ancient heaven) which is invisible. Indeed, Rabbi Saadiah Gaon, may the righteous be remembered for a blessing, was afraid to comment on this verse. 112 The word kedem means old. It implies that they are older than the earth and may even be eternal. Hence Saadiah refrains from commenting on this verse. See Krinsky. It appears to me that the sun, the moon and other luminaries are called lights in the firmament because they are visible there. 113 According to I.E. the luminaries are not in the firmament. They are above it. Nevertheless, Scripture states that God placed them in the firmament because they shine through the firmament and thus appear to be there.

Verse 15

Verse 16

AND GOD MADE. The sun and the moon are called the great lights in contradistinction to the stars. 114 The term "two great lights" implies that both lights were of equal size, hence I.E.'s comment. Cf. Rashi's comment on this verse. Similarly the first three sons of Jesse are called the elders, in contrast to their younger brothers. 115 Obviously only one of them was the eldest. In reality, Eliab, the first born, was the oldest of them all. As to the Midrash, which states One was not greater than the other, 116 That is, both the sun and the moon were the same size at creation. Cf. Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer, Chap. VI. there is a secret meaning to it. 117 The Midrashic statement is not to be taken literally. [TO RULE THE DAY.] The sun rules during the day and not at night because it is not seen. Conversely, the light of the moon and stars are not seen during the day. One may ask, do not the astronomers teach that Jupiter and all the stars, with the exception of Mercury and Venus, are larger than the moon? Why, then, is it written the great lights? 118 The implication from Scripture is clearly that the moon is larger than the stars. The answer is that the term great does not refer to size but to light, and the light of the moon is many times greater than their light because of its proximity to the earth. Thus we see that Scripture describes them as lights. 119 Scripture calls the sun and the moon lights because it refers to the light given off by them and not to their physical size.

Verse 17

AND GOD SET. Do not be surprised that Scripture states, And God set, 120 If the stars are above the firmament, why does Scripture state, And God set them in the firmament (Filwarg). According to Weiser the question is, "If the stars are set in the sky then why are they not visible there at all times?" for the Bible also says, I have set My bow in the cloud (Gen. 9:13). 121 The rainbow only appears to be in the cloud (Krinsky). Weiser interprets, "The rainbow is not always visible there." Even so Scripture states, I have set My bow in the cloud (Gen. 9:13).

Verse 18

AND TO RULE. The day spoken of in the Torah begins at sunrise and lasts until sunset. Night begins when the stars are first visible. Those who say that night begins with the appearance of three stars are correct. 122 According to the Talmud (Sabbath 35b), night begins with the appearance of three stars. Know that evening begins at sunset and lasts for one and a third hours, during which time a light-like appearance is seen in the clouds. Similarly morning dawns before sunrise. 123 Morning dawns one and a third hours before sunrise (Krinsky). When the light of the sun shines during the day and the light of the moon at night, they separate between the light and the dark. 124 Thus and to divide the light from the darkness refers to both the sun and the moon.

Verse 19

Verse 20

AND GOD SAID. Yishritzu (let it swarm) is a transitive verb, as is sharatz (swarm) in And the river shall bring forth swarms of frogs (ve-sharatz) (Ex. 7:28). 125 In Gen. 9:7 and Ex. 1:7 swarm is intransitive. I.E. points out that here and in Exodus it is transitive. Therefore swarm may be either a transitive or an intransitive verb (Weiser). The meaning of Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures and let fowl fly above the earth is that the waters shall produce living beings that will immediately fly. 126 Filwarg. The verse And let fowl fly…in the open firmament of heaven proves my interpretation of the firmament. 127 According to I.E. the firmament is the air or atmosphere, not heaven. See I.E.'s comments on verse 6. The birds fly in the air, not among the spheres; thus raki'a cannot be the domain of the spheres (Cherez). Saadiah Gaon 128 Filwarg explains that according to Saadiah the stars are in the firmament which is in motion. Thus the fowl fly along with the firmament. It should be noted that Saadiah identifies the firmament with heaven. explains al pene (in the open) to mean with the face of. Hence, according to the Gaon, the heavens face down. 129 Scripture says that the birds fly on the face of the firmament. Since, according to Saadiah, the fowl fly along with the face of the firmament (heaven), then the firmament (heaven) faces down. This is absurd and shows how wrong Saadiah is. The feh of ye'ofef (let fly) is doubled like the nun in yekhonen (till He establish) (Is. 62:7). 130 An ayin vav has its final letter doubled in the pi'el. The root of ye'offe f is ayin, vav, peh. The root of yekhonen is caf, vav, nun.

Verse 21

AND GOD CREATED. The meaning of romeset (creepeth) is walks. Some are of the opinion that the sin of romeset is in place of a samekh. 131 The root resh mem samekh means to tread. Thus romes with a sin means the same as romes with a samekh.

Verse 22

AND GOD BLESSED. The meaning of Be fruitful, and multiply is, "You shall be fruitful and you shall multiply." And die in the mount (Deut. 32:50) is similar because it is not in one's power to determine the time of one's death. 132 And die in the mount is to be rendered: and you shall die in the mount. For we cannot determine the time of our death. Similarly one can have intercourse but one cannot guarantee conception. Hence Be fruitful, and multiply, like and die, is not an imperative.

Verse 23

Verse 24

AND GOD SAID. Living creature is a general term for what the fire, water and earth gave birth to. 133 The basic elements according to medieval scientific belief. It also includes man.
CATTLE. Domesticated beasts that are utilized by man for their needs, for riding and for food.
AND CREEPING THING. Small animals that walk upon the earth.
AND BEAST OF THE EARTH. Animals that are in the wilderness where there are no human settlements. The vav at the end of ve-chayeto (and beast of) is superfluous. It is like the vav of le-mayeno (into a fountain) in into a fountain (le-mayeno) of waters (Ps. 114:8), and the vav in the son of (beno) Beor (Num. 24:3).

Verse 25

Verse 26

LET US MAKE MAN. Some are of the opinion that na'aseh (let us make) is a nifal participle 134 Na'aseh is not a first person plural future kal but rather a nifal participle. This interpretation eliminates the problem of God using a plural form when speaking of Himself. The verse is to be read as follows: And God said, Let a man be made (Cherez). and is to be compared to the same word in Now that which was prepared (na'aseh) for one day (Neh. 5:18). 135 Here na'aseh is definitely a nifal form. They further say that in our image, after our likeness are the words of Moses. 136 They interpret the verse as follows: God said, "Let a man be made." Moses added: "in our image after our likeness," i.e., in human form. This eliminates the problem of God having a human form. They also explain the pronominal suffix "his" in And God created man in His own image (v. 27) as referring to man, 137 The verse is to be explained as God created man in man's own image. and connect God (in Gen. 9:6) to made rather than to image. They read this verse as follows: "For God made man in an image," rather than "for in the image of God made He man." 138 They read the verse, ki be-tzelem, Elohim asah et ha-adam. The usual and correct reading is, ki be-tzelem Elohim, asah et ha-adam. Cherez notes that the same interpretation applies to verse 27, i.e., be-tzelem, Elohim bara oto. Now this interpretation is absurd. According to it the first quoted verse should have read, "Let a man be made." 139 If na'aseh adam means "Let (yehi) a man be made," then the text should read yehi na'aseh adam. Similarly Scripture should have read, "He made him in his image." 140 The reference is either to Gen. 9:6 (Netter) or 1:27 (Cherez). I.E.'s point is, why use such roundabout language to say that God made man in his (human) image when the Bible could have said this directly (Cherez). Vat. Ebr. 38 reads, "It should have stated, He made him in our image"; i.e., if "our image" relates to man's image, 9:6 and 1:27 should have so read. Furthermore, how can the his in His image (v. 27) refer to man? If this were the case then man had an image before he was created. 141 If man was created in man's image, then man had an image before he was created. This is obviously an impossibility. Finally, what sense would there be to Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed (Gen. 9:6), if the reason for the above is that man was made in an image? All living things have an image. 142 The verse stresses man's uniqueness;

i.e., he was created in God’s image. But if the verse speaks only of man having an image, animals, too, have an image. Wherein is the uniqueness of man? Saadiah Gaon explains in our image, after our likeness as referring to the dominion man exercises on earth. 143 Man rules over the world just as God rules over the universe (Weiser). He explains His image 144 Reading His image for image (Filwarg). as the image that God in His wisdom chose for man because He saw that this image was good for man. The Gaon further notes that Scripture connects image to God (be-tzelem Elohim) to stress man’s glorified state. 145 In the image of God (be-tzelem Elohim) means in the image chosen by God. A very precious image. Similarly Scripture states, and are gone forth out of His land (Ezek. 36:20). The Bible says this to emphasize the importance of the land of Israel because, in reality, The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof (Ps. 24:1). 146 All of the earth is in reality His land. There is thus no reason to call Israel “His land.” Hence the Torah calls the land of Israel “His land” in order to stress its importance. The Gaon also says that the word na’aseh (let us make) has the meaning of the singular even though it is in the plural because it is the plural of majesty. 147 Therefore Let us make really means: I will make. He offers as proof, and we will give thee the other also (Gen. 29:27); and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king (Daniel 2:36); peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite (nakkeh) them (Num. 22:6). However, these witnesses are false witnesses. 148 These verbs are not examples of the plural of Majesty. First of all, and we will give thee (ve-nittenah) (Gen. 29:27) is a nifal and its meaning is “the other will also be given thee.” 149 It is not a first person plural kal. It is like the word nittenah (is given) in and the city is given (nittenah) (Jer. 32:24). The vav conversive changes nittenah (she was given) to “she will be given (ve-nittenah),” as is the case with every verb in the perfect which becomes an imperfect when a vav conversive is prefixed to it. Similarly nakkeh bo (we may smite them) (Num. 22:6) means, “I and my army will smite them.” 150 In other words, nakkeh is not a plural of majesty. Further, nakkeh may be a pi’el infinitive 151 The nun of nakkeh (smite) is not the nun of the first person plural but is part of the root of the word nakkeh. The meaning of the word thus is to smite, rather than we will smite. meaning to smite, like nakeh (destroy) 152 Nakkeh is a pi’el infinitive. in But will not utterly destroy thee (ve-nakkeh lo anakkekah) (Jer. 46:28). The latter interpretation is supported by the fact that Scripture employs the phrase lo nukku (were not smitten) (Ex. 9:32), and a verb cannot come in the pu’a l unless it also comes in the pi’el. 153 Nukku (were smitten) is a pu’al. Pu’al is the passive of pi’el. If a verb is found in the pu’al it can also come in the pi’el, Hence smite can be a pi’el (Meijler). For alternate interpretations see Krinsky and Filwarg. Rabbi Moses Ha-kohen, the Spaniard, errs in his book. 154 Rabbi Moses ben Samuel Gikatila, an 11th century Bible commentator. It is not clear what error I.E. is referring to. Cf. Filwarg. Perhaps R. Moses also interpreted nakkeh as the plural of majesty. Similarly we will tell (Dan. 2:36) is Aramaic. 155 It is not a plural of majesty but the normal way of speaking in Aramaic (Krinsky). For if we will tell is a plural of majesty, how would Daniel dare to speak in such haughty terms before Nebuchadnezzar who was the “King of Kings”?I will now explain. Note that all the works of creation came into being by God’s command for the sake of man. Scripture relates that the earth and water brought forth plants and all living creatures. After all plants and living creatures had been created, God said to the angels, Let us make man ; i.e., We, rather than the earth and water, will occupy ourselves with his creation. We know that the Torah spoke the language of man, 156 Berekhot 31b. for it was given to humans who speak and hear. Now a human being cannot speak of things above or below him without employing human terminology. Hence Scripture uses such terms as the mouth of the earth (Num. 16:30), the

hand of the Jordan (Num. 13:29), 157 J.P.S. translates: the side of the Jordan. and the head 158 J.P.S. translates: beginning. of the dust of the world (Proverbs 8:26). Far be it from us to believe that God has an image. 159 On the basis of our verses reading, in our image, after our likeness. Scripture clearly refutes such a notion by stating, To whom then will you liken Me, that I should be equal (Is. 40:25). It is because man's upper soul is eternal and is compared in its existence to God and because man's soul is incorporeal and fills the body, which is a microcosm, in the same way that God fills the universe that Scripture states, in our image, after our likeness. May God's name be blessed. He commenced with the macrocosm and concluded with the microcosm. 160 Man. The account of creation begins with the creation of the "large world," the universe, and concludes with the creation of the "small world," man. "Man is a microcosm, a universe in little, for like the great universe he consists of a body animated by a soul" (Husik, p. 191). The prophet also says that he saw God's glory appear in human form (Ezek. 1:26). 161 Hence Ezekiel, like Moses, employed human terminology in speaking of God (Weiser). God is one. He is the creator of all. He is all. I cannot explain further. 162 I.E. "seems to favor the idea of eternal creation and maintenance of the universe, the relation of which to God is as the relation of speech to the speaker, which exists only so long as the speaker speaks. The moment he ceases speaking the sounds cease to exist" (Husik, p. 190). The mystery of God being "All" is difficult to comprehend and lends itself to misinterpretation. It might lead one to believe in pantheism. Man was originally created with two faces; 163 Hence there is no contradiction in Scripture stating, created He him, and then saying, created He them (Meijler). Weiser explains that I.E.'s interpretation is in keeping with the Rabbinic tradition that man was originally androgynous (Erubin 18a). Levine (p. 135) suggests that I.E. speaks of man's dual nature; i.e., he has a body and a soul. man is thus one but also two. In the image of God means in the image of the angels. Man was created both male and female. 164 The angels are of only one sex, man is of two. Nevertheless, man was created in the image of the angels. The words Be fruitful, and multiply are a blessing not a command, 165 According to the rabbis of the Talmud there is a commandment to "be fruitful and multiply." Cf. Kiddushin 35a. just as they are with regard to the creatures brought forth by the waters (Gen. 1:22). 166 Obviously no command is addressed to animals. Nevertheless, there is in fact a commandment to be fruitful and multiply transmitted by our sages, of blessed memory, which they attached to this verse in order to remember the commandment. 167 According to I.E. when a Rabbinic interpretation is not in keeping with the literal meaning of the verse, then the verse is to be interpreted literally, and the Rabbinic interpretation accepted as true in itself but not as being derived from the verse. The verse merely serves as a peg on which to attach an authentic tradition.

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

AND GOD SAID: BEHOLD I HAVE GIVEN YOU. God permitted mankind and every living thing to eat all herbs. He also permitted man to eat the fruits of the trees and limited the animals and creeping things to green herbs. At

this point in time the consumption of flesh was not permitted. That came after the flood.

Verse 30

Verse 31

THE SIXTH DAY. Some say that the word yom (day) is in the construct with sixth, 168 If sixth were an adjective then yom should have a definite article prefixed to it, i.e., ha-yom ha-shishi rather than yom ha-shishi, as in Deut. 3:25 ha-har ha-tov (that goodly hill-country); or both yom and shishi should be written without a heh, as in yom sheni (a second day). Hence yom ha-sheshi means the day of the sixth (Filwarg). and the meaning of yom ha-shishi (the sixth day) is the day of the sixth sphere. 169 That is, the day when the sixth heavenly sphere (the sphere of Jupiter) exerts an astrological influence on the earth. They say the same with regard to yom ha-shevi'i (the seventh day). However, they are wrong. Proof of their error is found in the teaching of the astrologers who tell us who the lord 170 That is, the dominant sphere. of the sixth day is. 171 The astrologers say that the sphere of Venus is dominant on the sixth day (Weiser). Venus is the third sphere (Cherez). It should be noted that in the Romance languages Friday is called Venus's day. Thus in Italian, Friday is known as venerdi and in French as vendredi. The meaning of yom ha-shishi, then, is the sixth day from day one. This is also the meaning of the seventh day. We similarly find 172 Where the noun is not preceded by a heh and the adjective is (Filwarg). ish ha-yisraeli (the Israelite man) (Leviticus 24:10) 173 J.P.S. translates: a man of Israel, taking man to be in the construct with Israel. and many such cases, among them reki'a ha-shamayim (Gen. 1:20), 174 J.P.S. renders: firmament of heaven, taking firmament to be in the construct with heaven. which should be rendered as "the firmament which is heaven."

Chapter 2

Verse 1

WERE FINISHED. Va-yekhullu is a pu'al. It follows the paradigm of va-yekhussu (were covered) in and all the high mountains…were covered (Gen. 7:19). Its meaning is: were finished. The earth includes the oceans since they form one entity. 1 Hence Scripture states, And the heaven and the earth were finished, rather than, And the heaven, the earth and the oceans were finished.

Verse 2

AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY GOD FINISHED. Some say 2 And on the seventh day God finished implies that God created something on the seventh day. The question is what? that the days are created entities, and with the creation of the seventh day God's work was finished. However, this interpretation is unpalatable. Others say that the bet may indicate before, as in Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out (be-disho) the corn (Deut. 25:4), and in howbeit the first day (ba-yom ha-rishon) ye shall put away leaven out of your houses (Ex. 12:15). 3 And on the seventh day God finished is to be translated as And by the seventh day God had finished His work which He had made. They similarly translate Deut. 25:4, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox before he treadeth out the corn,

and render Ex. 12:15 as howbeit before the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses. However, why go through all this trouble 4 Why give the bet a novel meaning (before) when in fact "finished" does not imply that any work was done on the Sabbath. when finishing work does not constitute an act. Saying God finished is equivalent to saying God did no work. This is the meaning of God finished and of and He rested. 5 Both mean God did no work.
His work which He had made refers to the work that he had done on Friday prior to the onset of the Sabbath.
And He rested on the seventh day from all His work pertains to all creations that God brought into being. 6 In other words part A of verse 2 refers to Friday, part B to the six days of creation. This also explains the reason why part A of the verse reads, His work and part B, all His work. Thus part B complements part A and is not redundant (Krinsky).

Verse 3

AND GOD BLESSED. A blessing means an increase in well being. On the Sabbath the body is blessed with a renewal of its reproductive strength and the soul with an increase in its intellectual and reasoning capabilities.
AND HALLOWED IT. No work was done on the Sabbath, in contrast to the other six days.
[WHICH GOD IN CREATING HAD MADE.] Its meaning is: God placed in the root of all the species the power to reproduce themselves. 7 I.E. explains asher bara Elohim la'asot (which God in creating had made) as follows: God created (bara) his creation in such a way that they would do (la'asot), i.e., reproduce themselves in the future. That is why bara is a perfect and la'asot is an infinitive (Cherez). I disagree with the person who explains la'asot (had made) as having the same meaning as made 8 They interpret asher bara Elohim la'asot to mean, which God created and made. They maintain that la'asot, an infinitive, is to be interpreted as asah, a perfect (Filwarg). They also do not differentiate between bara and asah, and interpret "made" in verse 2 as created (Filwarg, Krinsky). For I.E.'s interpretation of bara see Gen. 1:1; for asah see verse 4. and who, furthermore, insists that created and made are synonymous. Saadiah Gaon explains that the blessing and the holiness spoken of in this verse refer to those who observe the Sabbath. 9 According to Saadiah the blessing refers not to the Sabbath but rather to those who observe the Sabbath. We have translated according to Nachmanides' rendering of I.E., which had a vav before sanctified. They will be blessed and sanctified.

Verse 4

THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS. These are what they gave birth to. 10 I.E. usually renders toledot as "accounts of." Cf. Gen. 6:9; 37:1. Here toledot refers to what heaven and earth produced: trees, living creatures, man.
WHEN THEY WERE CREATED. When the firmament came into being and the earth became visible.
[IN THE DAY THAT THE LORD GOD MADE.] Be-yom asot means in the day that God fixed. 11 I.E. explains that asah (make) means "to fix in its final form." When the firmament and the earth received their final form, God commanded them to produce offspring (toledot). Proof of this can be seen in and He hastened to dress it (la-asot oto) (Gen. 18:7), and in Whom I have created which is then followed by I have formed him, and finally by yea, I have made him (asitiv) (Is. 43:7). 12 The prophet first speaks of creation (berativ) and last, of fixing in final form (asitiv).

Verse 5

SHRUB. Si'ach (shrub) means a tree: so, too, in Among the bushes (sichim) they bray (Job 30:7). In my opinion si'ach refers to a fruit-bearing tree, because Scripture compares man to a tree. 13 Scripture compares man to a fruit bearing tree. Cf. Ps. 1:1-3, Happy is the man…And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season. Behold, Scripture employs such terms as tree (si'ach), 14 The Hebrew word for speech is si'ach. Speech is the fruit of the mouth. Hence the tree to which it is compared, si'ach, must be a fruit-bearing tree (Filwarg). fruit, 15 Malachi 1:12. bough, 16 Ps. 119:113. limb, 17 Job 18:13. top of a tree 18 Deut. 26:18. See I.E. on the latter verse. and branch 19 Ps. 94:19. when speaking of man.

Verse 6

A MIST. Ed (mist) means smoke. 20 I.E. reads ashan (smoke). That is, a smoke-like substance went up from the earth. Weiser suggests reading anan (cloud) because smoke is out of place here since I.E. speaks of clouds. The day of their calamity (yom edom) is similar (Deut. 32:35). An evil day is called a cloudy day and a day of thick darkness. 21 Hence yom ed means a cloudy day, i.e., a dark day or day of calamity. The meaning of our verse is that via the power of the lights a mist arose from the earth and watered it and caused it to bring forth vegetation. Saadiah Gaon explains as follows: "And no mist yet went up from the earth." 22 According to Saadiah the word lo found in verse 5 also applies to this verse.

Verse 7

THEN THE LORD GOD FORMED. Via the power of the lights. 23 This sentence is omitted in Vat. Ebr. 38. It has been suggested that a scribe mistakenly copied it from the previous note (Weiser).
[FORMED.] Va-yitzer (formed) is a kal. It belongs to those verbs whose first root letter is a yod. 24 The root of this verb is therefore yod, tzadi, resh. It is like va-yiketz in And Noah awoke (va-yiketz no'ach) (Gen. 9:24).
The meaning of and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life is that man lives through the nostrils. They remove the air heated by the heart and replace it with fresh air. Scripture says man became nefesh chayyah (a living soul) 25 This very term is also used in describing the creation of animals. Cf. Gen. 1:24. because like the animals he was immediately able to walk, and thus differed from babies subsequently born.

Verse 8

AND THE LORD GOD PLANTED. God had previously planted a garden in the eastern section of the world in a place called Eden. He now placed the man there. 26 I.e., va-yitta (planted) is a pluperfect. The bet of be-eden (in Eden) in in Eden the garden of God (Ezek. 28:13) governs not only Eden but also garden. 27 I.E. is trying to solve the following problem. In Genesis, Scripture refers to a "garden" in Eden (gan be-eden). However, in Ezek. 28:13 the Bible states, in Eden the garden of God. The former implies that the garden is located in Eden, the latter that Eden is located in the garden, hence I.E.'s comment (Filwarg). Its meaning thus is, in Eden, in the garden of God. Even by the God (me'el) of thy father, who shall help thee and by (ve-et) the Almighty, who shall bless thee 28 The mem of me'el is also to be placed before ve'et and it is to be read as if written u-me'et. Thus this verse is to be rendered: Even by the God (me'el) of thy father who shall help thee, and even by

(u-me'et) the Almighty who shall bless thee. (Gen. 49:25) is similar. There are many other such instances in Scripture. 29 The technical term used by I.E. for this is mesharet (or moshekh) atzmo ve-acher immo. Friedlander explains this phrase as follows: "one word which stands for two" (literally, the word draws itself and another with it).
[THE MAN.] There is a secret meaning as to why the definite article has been placed in front of Adam. 30 Adam is a proper noun and a proper noun does not have a definite article placed in front of it. As to the secret alluded to by I.E., Filwarg comments, "I do not understand what secret he is hinting at." However, it appears that I.E. is hinting that "Adam" is a collective noun meaning mankind, the secret being that God placed mankind in the Garden of Eden. I.E. will later elaborate on this theme when he speaks of the secret meaning of the garden (Kaputa). Abravanel writes, "Ibn Ezra stirred the world by saying that the definite article which precedes the word "Adam" contains a secret. By this he means… (that) Adam should be understood as a noun designating the genus of mankind rather than an individual." The definite article is also found prefixed to Menasheh in the half tribe of Manasseh (shevet ha-menasheh) 31 According to Krinsky, I.E. is noting that a proper name which later becomes the name of a group may have a definite article placed in front of it. Thus Adam, although originally a proper noun, became a collective noun. (Deut. 3:13) and before the word Araunah in of Araunah the Jebusite (II Sam. 24:16). 32 According to I.E. araunah is a collective noun. It is also possible that the definite article is placed before Adam because the word adam is derived from the word used for ground (adamah). Hence the name Adam may be a proper name or an adjective. 33 See Kimchi, II Sam. 24:16. In our case it is an adjective meaning the one taken from the ground, and thus has a definite article prefixed to it.

Verse 9

AND OUT OF THE GROUND MADE THE LORD TO GROW. When God made the trees grow from the ground throughout the world he did the same in the Garden of Eden, but there he placed two trees not found anywhere else in the world.
AND THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE. In my opinion the phrase and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is to be understood as if written, "And the tree of the knowledge, knowledge of good and evil," because the word knowledge has a definite article prefixed to it and thus cannot be in the construct. 34 A word in the construct cannot have a definite article placed before it. The ark of the covenant 35 Ark has a definite article placed in front of it. Hence the phrase is to be read as if written, the ark, ark of the covenant. (Josh. 3:14) and even the prophecy of Oded the prophet (II Chronicles 15:8) 36 Prophecy has a definite article prefixed to it. Hence the phrase is to be read as if written, even the prophecy, prophecy of Oded the prophet. are similar. There are many other similar instances in Scripture.

Verse 10

AND A RIVER. Before man was created the river watered the garden on all sides.
[HEADS.] The alef in the word roshim (heads) is a root letter. 37 However, it is silent. There are times when the alef is not a root letter, e.g., the tillage of the poor (rashim) (Prov. 13:23). The alef of rashim (the poor) is not part of the word's stem (Filwarg). In marashotekhem (headtires) 38 According to Weiser. For other readings and the problems inherent in them see Filwarg. (Jer. 13:18) the alef is enunciated. The meaning of marashotekhem is your headtires.

Verse 11

THE NAME OF THE FIRST. Saadiah Gaon identifies Pishon with the Nile. But it is known that the Gihon 39 The second river flowing out of the garden. is close to the land of Israel, for Scripture states, And bring him (Solomon)…down to Gihon…and…anoint him there king over Israel (I Kings 1:33,34). It (the Gihon) flows from southeast of the land of Israel. 40 The Garden of Eden is located in the east (v. 8). Furthermore, according to I.E. the Garden of Eden lies south of the equator and the land of Israel is north of the equator. Thus the Gihon flows from the southeast of the land of Israel (Krinsky). Actually the Gihon is not a river but a spring located in the valley of Jehoshaphat. Here as in other places in his commentary I.E. errs with regard to geographical knowledge of the land of Israel. The same is true of the Euphrates (Perat), which marks the furthermost eastern boundary of the land of Israel. The commentaries also tell us that the Tigris (Chiddekel) is another river, in addition to the Euphrates, that flows through Baghdad. Thus these three rivers (the Gihon, the Euphrates and the Tigris) lie east of the land of Israel. 41 Hence, in contradistinction to the Gaon, the Pishon, too, must lie east of the land of Israel (Krinsky). However, the Nile is west of the land of Israel. Furthermore, the source of the Nile is in the mountain of Frankincense far south of the equator. Proof of this can be seen by the fact that its waters swell in the summer. 42 "For when it is summer time in the northern hemisphere, it is the time of the rainy season in the southern hemisphere. Thus the Nile, the source of which is in the southern hemisphere, swells during the summer" Chevel, Ramban, Commentary on the Torah, Vol. I, p. 86, note 414. We know that the Garden of Eden is below the equator where day and night are always equal. Fools question this and ask, how is this possible? 43 For day and night to be equal. However, there is positive proof that this is so. Thus according to Saadiah one must believe that the Pishon (the Nile) flows from the Garden of Eden, which is in the east, toward the mountain of Frankincense, which is in the southwest, and then flows north. 44 The Nile flows from the south to the north. The Garden of Eden is south of the equator toward the east. Thus if the source of the Nile is in the garden it must make this circuit. There is, in fact, no proof that the Pishon is the Nile. Indeed, Saadiah translates the land of Havilah which the Pishon compasses to fit in with his translation of the Pishon as being the Nile. The fact of the matter is that he had no tradition concerning these things. He did the same with families, states, animals, fowl and precious stones. 45 Whenever Saadiah came across an unfamiliar term he translated it as he saw fit. He explained Havilah as referring to Egypt because he translated Pishon as the Nile. Perhaps these things were revealed to him in a dream. He definitely erred in a number of them as I will point out in their proper place. 46 Cf. I.E., Ex. 28:9 and Lev. 11:13. So we will not rely on his dreams. Perhaps he did so out of respect for the honor of God, for he translated the Torah into Arabic language and script and he did not want the Arabs to think that there are parts of Scripture 47 Most texts of I.E. have the word mitzvot (commandments) instead of millot (words). which we do not understand. Scripture mentions that there is gold in the land of Havilah in order to glorify the river coming out of the Garden of Eden.

Verse 12

AND THE GOLD. Saadiah Gaon renders bedolach (bedellium) as pearls. He compares manna to them. However, Scripture merely says that manna had the color of bedolach 48 Not that it was identical to it. Saadiah says that bedolach resembles manna. As manna is round, so are bedolach round. This strengthens his interpretation that bedolach means pearls, for the Bible says that the appearance of the manna was like bedolach (Cherez). (Num.

11:7). The Gaon also says that shoham (onyx) is a precious clear white stone. The fact of the matter is that we do not know the precise meaning of either of these two items.

Verse 13

Verse 14

[TOWARD THE EAST OF ASSHUR.] The tav of kidmat (toward the east of) is in place of a heh. 49 Thus kidmat is kedemah in the construct. The difference between kedem and kedemah is that the heh suffixed to kedemah is in place of the preposition "to" (el), which is vocalized with a segol. 50 In other words kedemah means to the east, kedem, east. Similarly in and Abram went down into Egypt (mitzraymah) (Gen. 12:10), mitzraymah means "to Egypt." Kidmat asshur thus means toward the east of Asshur. Note that from the first verse of the Torah until the word made (Gen. 2:3), Scripture refers to the Deity as Elohim. Afterward, the honored and revered name (the Tetragrammaton) is coupled with it. How precious are the words of the ancients of blessed memory who said that the complete name of God is used over a complete world. Prior to the completion of creation there was no power to receive this name. 51 Creation came to an end with the making of man. The use of the Tetragrammaton is proper only with reference to man. See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 4:1 and Gen. 1:26. If God grants me life I will explain the secret of the Tetragrammaton when I comment upon the first Torah portion of the book of Exodus. I will then explain its meaning in the absolute and in the construct. Note that the location of the ground from which Adam was created was close to the Garden of Eden. 52 Hence man was not created in the garden. The commentaries assume that man walked to the Garden of Eden. According to Rabbinic tradition man came to the garden on the very day that he was created, hence I.E.'s comment that Adam was created close to the Garden of Eden (Krinsky). I note this because some say that Adam was created out of the ground of the land of Israel. 53 The Kuzari, 2:14. They have overlooked And it came to pass, as they journeyed east (Gen. 11:2). 54 Literally, From the east. The garden was located in the east (v. 8). The tower of Babel was built after the survivors of the flood journeyed from the east (Gen. 11:2). We know that the ark rested on Mt. Ararat (Gen. 8:4); thus Mt. Ararat lies in the east (See I.E. on Gen. 11:2). Mt. Ararat (in the east) is far from the borders of Israel. Hence the Garden of Eden (in the east), too, must be far from the land of Israel.

Verse 15

INTO THE GARDEN OF EDEN. Gan (garden) can be both masculine and feminine, 55 The pronominal suffixes of the verbs to toil and to keep are in the feminine. hence the plurals gannim and gannot. 56 For the feminine plural form of garden see Eccles. 2:5. For the masculine plural form see Cant. 4:15. Gannim is masculine plural; gannot, feminine plural. We ask those who maintain that the words to till (dress) it 57 J.P.S. translates "to dress it." The literal meaning of le-ovedah is to till it. Till fits in better with I.E.'s comment. and to keep it (le-ovdah u-le-shomrah) refer to the ground (adamah), how it is possible to till and keep a large area from a small one. 58 If Adam's task was to till and keep the soil outside the garden, then how was it possible for Adam to do this while he was in the garden? The land outside of the garden obviously extended for many miles. It would thus be impossible for Adam to live in the garden and tend the land outside of the garden. The pronominal suffixes (it) of

le-ovdah and of le-shomrah are in the feminine. Those who say that these words refer to the ground do so because they believe gan to be masculine while ground is feminine. However, I.E. maintains that gan can be either masculine or feminine. Thus le-ovdah u-le-shomrah can refer to gan. Furthermore, after Adam sinned God expelled him from the garden and commanded him to till the soil. But according to their interpretation he was already tilling the soil while he was living in the Garden of Eden. To till it (le-ovdah) therefore refers to the garden of whose fruit he ate. It was only after he sinned that he had to eat the grass of the ground, i.e., bread. To till it means to water it. To keep it means to guard the garden so that no animals enter therein and befoul it. Some say that le-ovdah means to serve God's commandment. 59 See Targum Yerushalmi on this verse. The root of the word till, ayin, bet, dalet, is also used in reference to worship (Deut. 6:13; 10:20). However, a commandment is not served. 60 While the root ayin, bet, dalet is used in referring to worship, it is not used in Scripture as a technical term for the practice of a precept. The term used for the latter is lishmor (to keep) (Deut. 8:1; 10:13). One serves (oved) God and observes (shomer) the commandments. One cannot be said to serve the commandments, hence I.E.'s objection to this interpretation.

Verse 16

AND THE LORD GOD COMMANDED THE MAN. The verb tzivvah (command) with the preposition al (upon) implies a prohibition. We similarly read, I will also command (atzavveh) the clouds (al he-avim) That they rain no rain upon it (Is. 5:6).

Verse 17

[THOU SHALT NOT EAT OF IT.] Even though I (God) permitted you to eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, do not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. 61 The Hebrew term implies a commandment to eat of the other trees in the garden, hence I.E.'s comment (Krinsky). One might ask, What need is there for the term of it after having stated but of the tree of the knowledge…thou shalt not eat? 62 The verse reads, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it. It would have sufficed to state, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat. The answer is that the Bible elaborates. We find a similar case in And she opened it, and saw it, even the child (Ex. 2:6). 63 Scripture should have stated, And she opened it and saw the child. The elaboration is there for emphasis (Weiser). It is also possible that the term of it means even a part of it. You will find the exact grammatical explanation of the term mi-mennu (of it) in the Sefer ha-yisod. 64 A Hebrew grammar composed by I.E. The book survives only in fragments. Note that Adam was an intelligent being, for God would not direct commands to one who was unintelligent. He was deficient in the knowledge of good and evil of only one thing. 65 Sexual desire. See I.E.'s comment on 3:6. Don't you see that Adam named every animal and fowl according to the nature of each of their respective species? Thus he was extremely intelligent. If Adam was unintelligent, God, knowing this, would not have brought His creatures to him to see what name he would give to each one of them. God also showed Adam the tree of knowledge, for his wife knew that it was in the midst of the garden. 66 Scripture does not explicitly tell us that God told Adam exactly where the tree was. However, from Eve's action we may surmise that He did. See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 3:6.

Verse 18

AND THE LORD GOD SAID. It is not good means it is not good for the man. 67 The verse literally reads: And the Lord God said, it is not good, being the man alone, hence I.E.'s comment. Cherez suggests that I.E. is negating an interpretation which holds it is not good for creation that man be alone lest it be said that he is a god on earth. Cf. Rashi.
A HELP MEET. Help meet should be understood in the light of Two are better than one (Eccles. 4:9).

Verse 19

[WHATSOEVER THE MAN WOULD CALL.] The lamed (to) in the clause and whatsoever the man would call also applies 68 The verse literally reads: and, whatsoever the man would call it (lo) every living creature. to the phrase living creature. Our clause is to be read as follows: and whatsoever the man would call to it, to every living creature, that was to be the name thereof. The verse elaborates, 69 That is, it repeats the object to it, to every living creature (Shadal). See note 62. as in And she opened it, and saw it, even the child (Ex. 2:6). 70 See note 63. There are many other such instances.

Verse 20

[TO ALL CATTLE.] Le-khol (to all) also governs two words, 71 See above, note 29. According to I.E. le-khol (to all), which is prefaced to cattle, also governs fowl. for the meaning of our verse is: And the man gave names to all cattle, and to all the fowl of the air. 72 J.P.S. translates, And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air. In that his men become few (Deut. 33:6) 73 It should be read as if written, In that his men not become few. In other words, the word ve-al in the first part of the verse also governs yehi (let). and And I have not learned wisdom (Prov. 30:3) 74 The verse literally concludes, And I have knowledge of the Holy One. The not of the first part also applies to the second part. Thus the above should read: And I do not have knowledge of the Holy One. Thus not governs two words. are similar. There are many other such instances.
[BUT FOR ADAM.] The meaning of but for Adam he did not find a help meet is that Adam did not find a helpmeet for himself. 75 J.P.S. translates, but for Adam there was not found a help meet. However, the literal reading of the verse is: but for Adam he did not find a help meet. The question is, to whom does "he" refer? I.E. suggests it refers to Adam, not God. I.E. points out that the Bible occasionally uses a proper noun in instances where a reflexive pronoun is expected. Cf. David Kimchi's commentary on this verse. This is the way of the Hebrew language. Thus we find Samuel saying, And the Lord sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel (I Sam. 12:11). 76 Rather than saying "and me," Samuel says, "and Samuel." Here, too, rather than saying "but for himself he did not find a help meet" the Bible says, but for Adam. It appears farfetched to me that he did not find a help meet refers to God. Scripture says here that the fowl were created out of the ground. 77 See verse 19. However, it states above that they were created out of the water. 78 Gen. 1:20. This is so because the fowl were created out of both earth and water.

Verse 21

AND THE LORD GOD CAUSED A DEEP SLEEP TO FALL. Va-yappel (caused to fall) is a hifil, as is va-yashev (drove away) in and Abram drove them away (Gen. 15:11). 79 Both va-yashev and va-yappel are hifils whose first root letter is a nun. The root of the former is nun, shin, bet and of the latter, nun, peh, lamed.

A DEEP SLEEP. Tardemah is a deeper sleep than shenah, and shenah is a deeper sleep than tenumah. 80 There are a number of Hebrew terms for sleep, tardemah, shenah and tenumah. The tav of tardemah (deep sleep) is not part of its root. 81 The root being resh, dalet, mem.
ONE OF HIS RIBS. Adam had two sides. 82 J.P.S. translates tzela as rib, I.E. as side. Tzela here is like tzela (side) in and for the second side (tzela) of the tabernacle (Ex. 26:20). 83 I.E.'s comment is in keeping with the Rabbinic view (Erubin 18a) that man was originally created male and female. God then separated the one female side from the male side (Krinsky). Tzela is a feminine noun. It means a side.
INSTEAD THEREOF. Tachtennah means in its place. Tachtennah (instead thereof) spelled with a superfluous nun is in the singular. Tachtehah is its plural form. Tachteni (under me) and tachtai (under me) 84 Cf. II Sam. 22:40; Ps. 18:40. are similar. 85 Tachteni, the singular form, has the superfluous nun ; tachtai, its plural form, does not (Weiser).

Verse 22

MADE HE. Va-yiven (made me) is a hifil conjugation. 86 This comment is difficult. Va-yiven is a kal conjugation. Krinsky and Weiser suggest deleting it. Indeed, some versions do. If it is retained then it must be explained as follows: Va-yiven (from the root bet, nun, heh) is short for va-yivneh. I.E. notes that this type of short form of a lamed heh root is found in the hifil and in the kal (Weiser). Vat. Ebr. 38 reads, va-yiven is a kal, as is va-yifen. This appears to be the correct reading. We find similar instances with the kal conjugation in va-yifen (and he turned) (Ex. 7:23) and va-yiken (and he bought) (Gen. 33:19).
AND BROUGHT HER. When Adam awoke from his sleep he thought that the woman was brought 87 The word brought is not to be taken literally. The woman was created next to Adam as he slept; thus she could not have been brought to Adam. before him as the animals were brought before him. Scripture speaks of Adam's thoughts. Similarly, And the men pursued after them (Josh. 2:7). 88 The men thought that they were pursuing the Israelite spies. In reality they were not, for the spies were hidden by Rahab. It is also possible that the woman was created outside of the garden and then was brought to Adam. When he looked around he knew that she had been cut from him, for one of his sides with its flesh was missing and he felt that it had been closed with other flesh.

Verse 23

AND THE MAN SAID. Then Adam said, "This time I have found a help meet like me for me, for this being came out of me." The tradition concerning Lilith is a homily. 89 There is a Rabbinic tradition that before the creation of Eve, Adam lived with the female demon Lilith. Hence he said, "This one, in contradistinction to Lilith, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." Cf. L. Ginsberg, Legends of the Jews, Vol. I., p. 65.
Le-zot (she) means because of this. 90 A lamed in front of a word usually means to. Zot means this. Thus le-zot should be rendered to this. However, I.E. points out that the lamed may also mean because. The meaning of our verse then is: because of this; i.e., because she is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh she shall be called woman, Say of me: (li) 91 Literally, say to me. Here, too, li does not mean to me but about me or of me. He is my brother (Gen. 20:13) is similar.
[WOMAN.] The shin in the word ishah (woman) receives a dagesh in place of the inaudible yod which is found in the word ish (man). 92 The dagesh makes up for the yod which is missing in ishah (woman). However, it is possible that ishah (woman) receives a dagesh to distinguish it from ishah (her husband) for at times the dagesh in the suffixed pronominal heh in ishah (her husband) 93 When the pronominal heh is sounded there is

no doubt that the speaker intends to say her husband. is not pronounced. The plural nashim (women) is derived from the words enosh (man) and anashim (men). 94 The feminine plural is formed by adding a vav and a tav to the singular. However, the word for women (nashim) is not formed in this manner. It is not the word for woman (ishah) plus the plural ending, hence I.E.'s comment.
[SHALL BE CALLED.] This refers to the name of the woman. 95 The Hebrew reads, yikkare ishah. Yikkare (shall be called) is masculine and cannot refer to the woman. It refers to shem (name) which is masculine.
[SHE WAS TAKEN.] The dagesh is omitted in the kof of lukachah (she was taken) in order to simplify its enunciation. This word is a pu'al conjugation even though we do not find it conjugated in the pi'el. 96 Pu'al is the passive of pi'el. Thus if we find a word in the pu'al we would expect to find it in the pi'el. However, the root lamed, kof, chet is not found in the pi'el, hence I.E.'s comment. According to Hebrew grammer a dagesh is placed in the second radical of a pu'al.
[AND THEY SHALL BE ONE FLESH.] This means they shall live together as if they were one flesh, or let them once again be one flesh. 97 Man and woman were originally one flesh. Some say they will be one flesh through the child they will produce. However, this interpretation is farfetched. 98 Animals also produce offspring, yet they are not said to be "one flesh."

Verse 24

Verse 25

NAKED. Arummim (naked) is an adjective. And stripped the naked (arummim) of their clothing (Job 22:6) is similar. Some say that arum (prudent) in A prudent man (arum) seeth the evil and hideth himself (Prov. 22:3) has essentially the same meaning. What the verse means is that the mind of the wise is uncovered (arum) and open to everything like the eye. 99 In other words, a wise man is called arum because his mind is open (naked) to everything (Weiser).
AND WERE NOT ASHAMED. Yitboshashu (ashamed) is related to the word boshet (shame). It is an ayin, vav. 100 The root of the word is bet, vav, shin. The last letter of the root is doubled. 101 The last letter of an ayin, vav root is doubled when conjugated in the hitpa'el. It is like the verb yitbonen (he will consider) (Job 11:11). 102 From the root bet, yod, nun. The nun is doubled. A kamatz is placed beneath the first shin because the word ends a verse. 103 The first shin is usually vocalized with a sheva, viz., yitbosheshu.

Chapter 3

Verse 1

NOW THE SERPENT. Some say that the woman understood and knew the language of the animals. They interpret And the serpent said as meaning, that the serpent spoke through signs. 1 That is, the serpent did not actually speak. He conveyed his intentions through signs; i.e., he went to the tree and pantomimed the eating of the fruit thereof. Others say that the serpent was in reality Satan. 2 Satan took the form of the serpent. Now why don't they look at what Scripture states at the close of this chapter (v. 14 and 15)? How is Satan to crawl upon his belly or eat the dust of the ground? 3 Satan is incorporeal and consequently cannot crawl on the

ground or eat dust. Furthermore, what meaning is there to the curse they shall bruise thy head if the reference is to Satan? 4 Man does not bruise Satan's head. Hence the reference must be to a real serpent. Many err and inquire why the serpent was cursed. They ask, was the serpent fully intelligent? 5 God would not punish a dumb animal. Was he commanded by God to refrain from beguiling the woman? 6 There is a Rabbinic dictum, "One who is not warned is not punished." Rabbi Saadiah Gaon says since we know that only humans are intelligent and capable of speaking, we must conclude that neither the serpent nor Balaam's ass spoke. He argues that in reality an angel spoke for them. However, Rabbi Samuel ben Hofni took issue with him. 7 Rabbi Samuel ben Hofni held that the serpent actually spoke. Some editions read: "with them," i.e., with Saadiah and the others who do not interpret that the serpent actually spoke. On the other hand, Rabbi Solomon ibn Gabirol, the great Spanish scholar and poet who wrote metered verse, arose and disagreed with Rabbi Samuel ben Hofni. It appears to me that we are to interpret the account of the serpent literally. The serpent spoke and walked in an upright position. The One who gave intelligence to man also gave it to the serpent. Scripture itself bears witness that the serpent, although not as intelligent as man, was more subtle (arum) than any beast of the field. 8 Verse 1. Hence the serpent was responsible for his actions. The meaning of arum (subtle) is wise, i.e., one who conducts his affairs intelligently. Now do not be surprised that Scripture uses the term arum (subtle, in v. 1) after arummim (naked in Gen. 2:25) when each of these words has a different meaning. Scripture is being poetic. Similarly, With the jawbone of an ass (ha-chamor), heaps upon heaps (chamor chamoratayim) (Judges 15:16), and on thirty ass colts (ayarim), and they had thirty cities (ayarim) (Jud. 10:4). Furthermore, if an angel spoke via the mouth of the serpent, then the serpent did not sin. 9 Why, then, was the serpent punished? I.E. now offers arguments against Saadiah's interpretation. This angel could not be God's messenger. 10 God would not send an angel to induce Adam and Eve to sin. Neither does an angel rebel against God. 11 The angel would not beguile the woman on his own accord, for angels do not rebel against God. Those who ask, how did the serpent find the woman, 12 There were no animals in the garden. See I.E.'s comment on 2:15. are not asking a valid question. 13 The serpent may have encountered the woman at the gate of the garden and engaged her in conversation there (Krinsky), or she may have left the garden briefly and met the serpent outside.
The use of the term af ki (yea) shows that the serpent spoke other things to the woman and that at the end of his conversation with her said, "yea much more so (af ki) 14 I.E. argues that af ki (yea) is a technical term used in a kal ve-chomer, an argument from a minor to a major premise. Cf. Job 25:6. Hence a conversation had to precede this final point. See Rashi. now that God said: Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden (v. 1)."The serpent did not mention the revered and feared name of God 15 The Tetragrammaton. The serpent employed Elohim when referring to God. because he did not know it. The woman also added to God's commandment, neither shall ye touch it. 16 God said, thou shalt not eat of it, (Gen. 2:17). The woman said, God hath said: Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. The wife of Manoah did the same when she quoted the angel as saying, for the child shall be a Nazirite unto God from the womb to the day of his death (Jud. 13:7). 17 The angel had told her: For the child shall be a Nazirite unto God from the womb (Jud. 13:5). He did not mention to the day of his death.

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

AND YE SHALL BE AS GOD. As angels. 18 See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 1:1.

Verse 6

AND WHEN THE WOMAN SAW. In her heart.
AND THAT THE TREE WAS TO BE DESIRED. Because it had the power to make one wise, and her eyes would "open." 19 The lamed of le-haskil has the meaning of because. Therefore le-haskil (to make one wise) is to be interpreted "because it made one wise" (Krinsky). Her eyes would open is to be interpreted metaphorically. See verses 5 and 7.
[UNTO HER HUSBAND WITH HER.] The meaning of with her is that they ate together of the fruit and that she disclosed to him the secret that the serpent had revealed to her. Adam thus did not sin unwittingly and was therefore punished for violating God's command. Many commentators say that the tree of knowledge was a fig tree. They base their assertion on and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves girdles (v. 7). 20 See Sanhedrin 70b, By the very thing with which they sinned were they rectified. However, if this interpretation were correct, the Bible would say, "And they sewed leaves of the tree of the knowledge." Many others say that it was a wheat plant. 21 Berakhot 40a and Sanhedrin 70b. However, in my opinion the two trees in the midst of the garden were unique species not found anywhere else on the face of the earth. One of them, the tree of knowledge, possessed the power to instill sexual desire. Therefore the man and woman covered their nakedness. The meaning of va-yitperu (sewed) is well-known. 22 It means sewn. Tafarti in I have sewed (tafarti) sackcloth upon my skin (Job 16:15) is similar. Those who ask where Adam and Eve got a needle (to sew their girdle) emit hot air. Adam and Eve could have used a sharp piece of wood. Upon eating of the tree of knowledge, Adam knew (yada) his wife. Yada (knew) is a euphemism for sexual intercourse. Sexual intercourse is called "knowledge" because sexual desire came from the tree of knowledge. Moreover, a young man begins to have sexual desire at the age at which he begins to "know" good and evil. 23 Hence the tree that implanted this new knowledge is called "the tree of knowledge of good and evil."
The tree of life extended life so that by partaking of it man would live for many years. Le-olam (v. 22) does not mean forever. We find this to be the case with the term olam in and he shall serve him for ever (le-olam) (Ex. 21:6), 24 According to the Talmud it means until the jubilee. Cf. Kiddushin 15a. and in and there abide for ever (I Sam. 1:22) 25 It can only mean for us as long as he lives. Therefore va-chai le-olam (and live forever, v. 22) is to be rendered, "and he will live for a very long time." and in many other verses,Some commentators insist that the verse for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Gen. 2:17) indicates that man was created immortal and that he became mortal as a punishment for his sin. Many ask, what sin did Adam's children commit that they were punished with death? Now this is absurd. Man and beast both share a common spirit (life force) through which they live and experience sensations in this world. As animals are destined to die, so must man die. The advantage of man over beast lies in the portion from above (the soul) which man has been granted. A Greek physician has proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that it is impossible for man to live forever.

26 Galen, Third section of the use of limbs as quoted by Maimonides, Guide to the Perplexed, Part III, Chap. XII. I.E. maintains that man was not originally created immortal.

Verse 7

Verse 8

AND THEY HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD GOD WALKING. They heard the voice of God walking toward evening, at the time of the day when the breeze blows. Scripture employs the term holekh (walking) when referring to a voice as seen in The sound thereof shall go (yelekh) like the serpent's (Jer. 46:22), and And when the voice of the horn waxed (holekh) louder and louder (Ex. 19:19). However, the Spanish grammarian, Rabbi Jonah ibn Janah, says that this verse is to be interpreted as follows: And they heard the voice of God as man was walking in the garden. He also interprets the day referred to in for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Gen. 2:17) 27 The problem with this verse is that Adam did not die on the day that he ate of the tree of knowledge. as meaning a thousand years, as the Midrash does. 28 The Midrash states that a day of God is a thousand years. Thus what God was telling Adam was, "If you eat of the tree of knowledge you will die at the end of a thousand years." Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 19:14. Others say that Adam was created on a Friday and died on a Friday. 29 Thus he actually did die on the day that he ate of the tree of knowledge. Others say that the meaning of for in the day…thou shalt surely die is that on that day you will incur the death penalty. Still others say that die at times means punishment, as seen in the verse the man that hath done this deserveth to die (II Sam. 12:5). 30 The man who took his neighbor's sheep did not commit a capital crime. Still others say the meaning of this verse is that on the day you eat of this tree you will begin to die. They bring proof from a child. 31 A cryptic comment. It is suggested that I.E. draws a parallel to a child who grows to sexual maturity and then begins to decline in physical strength (Krinsky). Filwarg rejects this interpretation by noting that physical decline does not set in with sexual maturity. However, it should be noted that medieval man believed that the emission of semen weakened the body and hastened its decline (see Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot De'ot, Chap. 4). Thus man's decline sets in with his sexual maturity. Since, according to I.E., man's sexual maturity came with the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, his decline, too, started at this time. According to my thinking the correct interpretation of this verse is to be found in the words of the Rabbinic sages who said that Adam repented. 32 Had Adam not repented, he would have died on the day he ate of the tree of knowledge. But he repented and thus was spared. Their interpretation is in keeping with the words of Jeremiah who says, At one instant I may speak concerning a nation…to destroy it, but if that nation turn from their evil.. J repent of the evil that I thought to do unto it (Jer. 18:7, 8).

Verse 9

AND THE LORD GOD CALLED. Where art thou was a means of starting a conversation. Similarly, Where is Abel thy brother? (Gen. 4:9). 33 God thus knew what happened to Abel. Hence Where is Abel thy brother was a means of starting a conversation. Similarly God knew where Adam was, and Where art thou was a means of starting a conversation. Behold, Cain denied his brother's whereabouts, but God responded, the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground (Gen. 4:10).

Verse 10

Verse 11

SHOULDEST NOT. Bilti with a lamed prefixed to it (le-vilti) means "not to." Without this lamed (bilti) it means "only."
EAT. Akhol (eat) is an infinitive. It is like shemor (keep) in 34 Shemor also is an infinitive. in not keeping (shemor) His commandments (Deut. 8:11).

Verse 12

WHOM THOU GAVEST TO BE WITH ME. Thou gavest to me one who gave me the fruit to eat. The word immadi (to be with me) means the same as immi (with me). Its meaning is: to be with me in the garden. However, immadi, in contradistinction to immi, is found only in the first person singular.
AND I DID EAT. The alef of va-okhel (and I did eat) is a first person imperfect prefix. Its vowel (a cholam) takes the place of the alef of the root that has been dropped. The khaf is vocalized with a tzere because and I did eat comes at the end of a verse. A vav prefixed to a participle is always vocalized with a sheva, and never with a kamatz. 35 I.E.'s point is that va-okhel is a first person perfect and not a participle. I.E. makes this point because a participle is vocalized with a cholam over the first radical and a tzere beneath the second radical. Hence va-okhel at first glance appears to be a participle. I.E. points out that this is not so. As a participle it would not have a vav with a kamatz affixed to it since a connective vav is vocalized with a sheva. Since the vav of va-okhel has a kamatz beneath it, it must be a vav conversive, changing okhal, an imperfect, to va-okhal, a perfect. However, because va-okhal comes at the end of a sentence it is vocalized va-okhel.

Verse 13

BEGUILED ME. Persuaded me.

Verse 14

CURSED. The serpent was cursed with a short life. 36 Just as blessing is an addition of the good (see I.E. on Gen. 2:3), curse is a diminution of the good. According to this interpretation cursed art thou refers to the serpent's life span. However, the correct interpretation is that the serpent was cursed in manner of locomotion. 37 He lost his legs and consequently could no longer walk erect. According to this interpretation cursed art thou refers to the serpent's means of locomotion.
UPON THY BELLY. Gechonekha (thy belly) means thy chest. We cannot determine if the nun of gakhon (thy belly) is part of the root of this word, as the nun of adon (lord) is, or if it is a paradigm nun like the nun of zadon (insolence). 38 Zadon (insolence) comes from the root zayin, vav, dalet ; therefore the nun of zadon is not part of its root. Those who say that gakhon is so called because of the air that rushes forth from it 39 From the root gimel, vav, chet, meaning to burst forth. They explained Gihon to mean the dashing river, Perat as the river whose waters are fruitful and multiply, and Pishon as the gamboling river. are indulging in homiletics. They similarly explain Gihon (Gen. 2:13). They also say that Pishon (Gen. 2:11) comes from the same root as tafushu (ye gambol) in Because ye gambol (tafushu) as a heifer (Jer. 50:11). Also,

they say that Perat (the Euphrates, Gen. 2:14) comes from the same roots as Be fruitful (peru), and multiply (u-revu) (Gen. 1:28). But they are unable to cross the great river, the Chiddeckel (the Tigris) (Gen. 1:28), which stood before them. 40 They were unable to derive it from one root. They decided that it is made up of two words, chad (swift) and kal (light), and means the river whose waters are swift and light.

Verse 15

AND I WILL PUT ENMITY…THEY SHALL BRUISE THY HEAD. Her children shall smite thee upon thy head. Yeshufeni (bruise) in He that would break me (yeshufeni) with a tempest (Job 9:17) is similar to yeshufekha (shall bruise thee). Look at what follows and you will see that it is so. 41 The second part of the verse quoted from Job reads, And multiply my wounds without cause. This proves that the verb yeshufeni means he will bruise me, or smite me. Since yeshufekha and yeshufeni come from one root, they have one meaning. Hence yeshufekha means shall bruise thee. A bet has been omitted from the word rosh (head) in they shall bruise thy head. 42 The verse literally reads, They shall bruise thee head. With a bet it reads, They shall bruise thee upon the head. The bet is to be supplied by the reader. We find the same in into the house (bet) of the Lord 43 The verse should read, be-vet Adonai. However, it reads, bet Adonai. (II Kings 12:17).
HEEL. Ekev means the foot. If the head symbolizes the first, then the heel symbolizes the last. Akevo in their rear (akevo) lying in wait on the west (Josh. 8:13), is similar.

Verse 16

I WILL GREATLY MULTIPLY. Harbah (multiply) is an infinitive.
THY PAIN. The pain a woman suffers when she is deflowered. 44 See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 34:12. The Bible speaks of pain and conception rather than conception and pain. Hence the pain spoken of by Scripture precedes the conception.
AND THY TRAVAIL. The nun of ve-heronekh (and thy travail) is not a root letter. 45 The root of conceive is heh, resh, heh. Herayon refers to pregnancy and childbirth. Pregnancy is considered by our verse to be a punishment because it and childbirth are a burden to women. 46 Elsewhere in Scripture pregnancy is considered to be a blessing, as seen in the verse Blessings…of the womb (Gen. 49:25).
THY DESIRE. Thy obedience. 47 Perhaps I.E. understood thy desire to mean your husband's desire will be your desire. Weiser suggests that the woman's desire for her husband will be so strong that she will listen to everything that he commands her. This means you will obey whatever your husband commands you for you are under his authority to do his will.

Verse 17

AND UNTO ADAM…CURSED IS THE GROUND. It will not yield much produce.
IN TOIL THOU SHALT EAT OF IT. This is short for thou shalt eat of its produce. 48 The verse literally reads, thou shalt eat it (the ground). However, man does not eat the ground. Therefore I.E. says that our verse is abridged (Weiser). And let them be of those that eat at thy table (I Kings 2:7) 49 The verse literally reads, and let them be of those who eat thy table. The words "the food of" must be supplied by the reader. is similar.

Verse 18

THORNS ALSO AND THISTLES. Kotz refers to large thorns. Dardar (thistles) are smaller than thorns. Its root is dalet, resh (dar). The other two letters of the word are not root letters. 50 They indicate that the word is a diminutive, i.e., dar a thistle, dardar a small thistle (Filwarg). For alternate interpretations see Weiser. I.E. literally reads, He lives (dar) alone, for his brother is missing (ne'edar).
[IN TOIL.] Thou shalt toil in opening, harrowing and sowing. 51 Cf. Is. 28:24. In addition to this, man will also suffer the sick evil of finding thorns growing amidst the produce of the field.
[THE HERB OF THE FIELD.] Bread. For prior to this, man sustained himself with the fruits of the Garden of Eden.

Verse 19

[IN THE SWEAT OF THY FACE SHALT THOU EAT BREAD]. Unlike the animals, you will have to work at winnowing, grinding, kneading and cooking before you can eat. The meaning of ze'at (sweat of) can be ascertained from Rabbinic sources. 52 The rabbis often employ the term ze'ah for sweat. It follows the paradigm of shenah (sleep). Its root is yod, zayin, ayin. Ba-yazah in they shall not gird themselves with anything that causeth sweat (ba-yazah) (Ezek. 44:18) is similar. The meaning of the verse is, they shall not come to sweat. We know that man is created out of the four elements. What, then, does Scripture mean by for out of it (dust) was thou taken? 53 The four elements are: fire, air, water and earth. Why does Scripture only mention dust (earth)? At man's death his body decomposes into all four elements (Krinsky). The answer is that man's skeletal frame is created out of earth (dust). Hence the bones are heavy 54 Earth is the heaviest element. The Bible refers to the body as bones (Gen. 50:25) because they form man's frame. Man is said to come from the earth because his bones are created out of dust. and lack sensation. The skeletal frame is the foundation of the body. Look, Scripture states, and the bones came together, bone to its bone (Ezek. 37:7). The bones are like the frame of a house. Thus after the bones came together and, lo, there were sinews upon them, and flesh came up, and skin covered them above (Ezek. 37:8). Similarly Scripture states, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence (Gen. 50:25).

Verse 20

EVE. The yod and vav are interchangeable. 55 The Bible says that the woman was called Chavvah because she was the mother of all chai. If this is the case then she should have been called chayyah. Thus I.E. points out that the vav and yod interchange and that chayyah and chavvah are one and the same. We thus find hoyah and hoveh interchanged in behold, the hand of the Lord is upon (hoyah) thy cattle (Ex. 9:3), and in and thou wouldest be (hoveh) be their king (Neh. 6:6). The reason she was called Chavvah and not Chayyah is to distinguish her name from the noun meaning animal (chayyah).
THE MOTHER OF ALL LIVING. Humans.

Verse 21

GARMENTS OF SKIN. Some say that Adam and Eve originally consisted of bone and flesh, and God now covered them with skin. 56 The problem which the commentaries found in this verse is, where did the skins to cover them come from? No animal was yet killed or had died so that its skin would be available for use as material for clothes (Filwarg). Others say garments of skin means garments for their skin. 57 The garments were not made out of skin. They were garments for their skin. These commentators interpret as if written le-or. Still others say that there exists an animal which

has a form similar to that of man, and God commanded that it shed its skin. 58 Hence the skin. The skin garments thus fitted man perfectly. However, one should in reality not bother to inquire into this matter. We ought to believe that God made garments of skin for Adam and Eve. Who can recount all of God's mighty acts? Who can tell of all of his wonders? There is no end to God's greatness.

Verse 22

AND THE LORD GOD SAID…AS ONE OF US. When one (echad) is in the absolute, it has a cantillical note which indicates the foregoing and it is vocalized with a segol beneath the alef. However, when it is vocalized with a pattach beneath the alef (achad) it is in the construct. Similarly, As one of (ke-achad) the tribes of Israel (Gen. 49:16). Hence, according to the rules of grammar, the word ke-achad (as one of) cannot have the meaning of as one. 59 Onkelos interpreted ke-achad in this way: "Man has become one on earth." Cf. Rashi. Man is one on earth as I am one in heaven. I.E. disagrees, for ke-achad is in the construct. Additionally, if ke-achad is in the absolute, then it is meaningless. 60 If ke-achad is in the absolute, then Scripture reads, man is like one. This is a meaningless statement. Furthermore, if ke-achad is in the absolute, the notes should have connected mi-mennu (of us) to la-da'at (to know). 61 Not to ke-achad. A word in the absolute is not connected by a cantillical note to the word that follows. Since ke-achad is connected to mi-mennu it must be in the construct. Mi-mennu is a plural, 62 Onkelos translates mi-mennu as a singular.
The word mi-mennu can be rendered of us or of him. as in ish mi-mennu (none of us) (Gen. 23:6). I have already explained in The Book of Foundation why the nun of mi-mennu receives a dagesh when in the plural. 63 The word mi-mennu should have been spelled with two nuns. The dagesh makes up for the missing nun (Weiser). I.E. makes this point here because the word mi-mennu has a dagesh. He does not want one to think mistakenly that it is a singular because of this dagesh. See next note. The Babylonian grammarians who do not place a dagesh in it are in error. 64 The Babylonian grammarians, in contradistinction to the Palestinian grammarians, place a dagesh in mi-mennu when it is singular and omit the dagesh when it is plural. I.E. says that the Palestinians who place a dagesh in both instances are correct. The meaning of the verse (v. 22) is the same as ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil (v. 5). 65 Man has become like an angel. See I.E.'s comments on verse 5. On the other hand, God might be saying what was in Adam's mind. 66 Adam now thinks that he has become as one of us. The use of the term of us presents no problem. It is similar to Let us make man in our image (Gen. 1:26) and Come, let us go down (Gen. 11:7). God in all these cases is addressing the angels.

Verse 23

THEREFORE THE LORD GOD SENT HIM FORTH. When the word shelach (sent forth) is followed by a mem, it has a negative connotation and means banished, as in cast them out (shalach) of My sight (Jer. 15:1). The great Spanish scholar who interpreted sent him forth in our verse in a positive way, as in and Abraham went with them to bring them (le-shallecham) on the way (Gen. 18:16), and in and he hath sent him away (va-yeshallechehu), and he is gone in peace (II Sam. 3:23), erred. For if he was right then the place Adam was going to was a better place than the Garden of Eden. If this sage should ask, if the meaning of sent him forth is he banished him, then why does Scripture go on to say, So He drove out the man (v. 24)? 67 If sent forth means drove out, then Scripture is being redundant. The answer is that when man was driven from the garden (v. 4), God placed the cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden. 68 It does not relate

that man was driven out, but rather tells that when man was driven out God did the following. It thus does not repeat verse 24.
[THE CHERUBIM.] Some say that cherubim means like images of youths, 69 See Hagigah 13b. The Talmud says that the Hebrew word keruv is like the Aramaic ke-ravyah, ke (like), ravyah (a child). which is the translation of the Aramaic ke-ravyah. However, I believe that the word is a general term for any image. Ezekiel, who first says that he saw the image of an ox (Ezek. 1:10) and later speaks of a cherub (Ezek. 10:14), refers to one and the same image. The image was not changed from that of an ox to that of a cherub because an ox would be a reminder of the sin of the golden calf, as this sin was not committed in Ezekiel's day. 70 Hagigah 13b states, "One verse says… and they had the face of an ox (Ezek. 1:10). Elsewhere it is written… the face of a cherub (Ezek. 10:14). Resh Lakish said: Ezekiel entreated concerning it and changed it into a cherub. He said before Him, Lord of the Universe, shall an accuser become an advocate." I.E. notes that the Talmudic interpretation is not in keeping with the literal meaning of the Bible. When Ezekiel speaks of the cherub (10:14) he has in mind the image he had mentioned previously (the image of an ox in 1:10). Therefore every image of an ox is a cherub, but not every cherub is an image of an ox. Proof of this is that Ezekiel refers to all images that he had seen as cherubim (10:20). 71 The image of a man, lion, ox and eagle Our verse speaks of the cherubim, which implies the cherubim known to all, i.e., angels. 72 The form of the cherubim was known to Biblical man (Krinsky). They had a flaming two-edged sword in their hands. The meaning of which turned every way is that the sword had two edges. Those who say that the flaming sword refers to the sun are incorrect. 73 Those who put forward this interpretation hold that the phrase refers to the great heat of the sun which guarded the garden (Weiser).

Verse 24

AT THE EAST. Mi-kedem means at the east. 74 The entrance to the garden was at the east (Weiser). Note, the story of the garden of Eden is to be interpreted literally. There is no doubt that it happened exactly as described in Scripture. Nevertheless, it also has a secret meaning. 75 This comment of I.E. is cryptic in the extreme. Our translation follows Weiser's interpretation. Levine puts this comment of I.E. in the context of the latter's philosophy. He writes that according to I.E., "wise persons recognize that their mission is to fulfill their soul's will to return to the heavenly realm. Thus the will of a man controls the future of his soul. The will is not perfectly pure. Although man's well being is contingent upon his making the correct choices, volition (chefetz, desire) frequently acts contrary to the intellect, due to the paradox of various faculties within man struggling for control. Volition (desire) is animated by the intellectual faculty but it is opposed by lust which originates from the appetitive and sensitive dimensions (Gen. 3:24)." Man's goal in life is thus to seek "knowledge of God" and to subdue "all interfering passions" (p. 14). It alludes to the following: Intellect (the Garden of Eden) 76 Man's intellect is his Garden of Eden (Kaputa). gave birth to desire (the tree of knowledge). Desire gave birth to man's actions. It is via his actions that man can elevate himself, for the force that propels his desire is in front of him. 77 The sexual organs, the source of man's desire, is in front of man (Weiser). Perhaps what I.E. means by "his desire is in front of him" is that man can control himself. The fig leaves prove this. 78 They cover man's sexual organs. Man's actions are also called the testing ground, for by them man is tried. Intellect and desire are only potential. 79 Man's actions are actual. They show whether man is guided by his desires or by his intellect. The one who understands the secrets of the tree of knowledge

will understand the secret of the four rivers that divided into four parts (Gen. 2:10). 80 According to some medieval philosophers, man's brain is divided into four parts, each governing a different aspect of man's mental life, i.e., sensation, imagination, judgment and memory. According to Kaputa, I.E. held similar ideas. What he is saying is that all these functions have one source, man's intellect, his Garden of Eden. This is the secret of the Garden of Eden and the garments of skin. 81 Man must control his desires. There is also an allusion in all of this to man's potential immortality (the tree of life). The intelligent will understand that this is the ultimate purpose of man's life on earth. 82 Man is to live a life guided by his intellect so that he will attain immortality.

Chapter 4

Verse 1

AND THE MAN. When Adam realized that he would not live forever he saw the need of perpetuating the human race. Eve concurred and therefore exclaimed, upon giving birth to a child, I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord. 1 God wanted the human race to go on. By producing a child Eve was doing God's will, hence her remark (Krinsky). Eve used the Tetragrammaton, and not the term Elohim, because the Lord's spirit now rested upon the earth via the human race even as it does on the heavenly bodies. 2 Man is the only being on earth upon whom the Tetragrammaton rests. See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 1:26 and 2:12. The continuity of the human species insured that God's spirit would rest upon the earth. The term good 3 I.E.'s comment "the term good" is difficult. According to Krinsky, I.E. refers to Gen. 3:22, "To know good and evil." Meijler emends millat (term or word) to milleh (filled). This would give: God filled the whole with good. refers to creation as a whole. We thus read, And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good (Gen. 1:31). Evil is found only in a part of creation. 4 According to Netter, Krinsky, Cherez and Weiser, I.E.'s point is to tell us that good refers only to the species; i.e., the species is eternal; however, the individual must die. Cf. Maimonides, Guide for the Perplexed, Part III, Chap. 10, and I.E.'s introduction to Ecclesiastes. In the latter I.E. maintains that the little evil found in the world is overshadowed by the preponderance of good in creation.

Verse 2

Verse 3

AND IN PROCESS OF TIME. That Cain tilled the soil, he brought an offering to the place that he had set aside for his devotions. I disagree with those who say that he brought an offering to his father. 5 Adam had the status of a high priest, and bringing him a gift was equivalent to bringing an offering to God (Krinsky). There is support for the notion that Cain did not bring his offering from the first of the fruits of the ground in Scripture's stating that And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. 6 Scripture does not mention the same with regard to Cain. Cf. Rashi's comment on this verse.

Verse 4

AND THE LORD HAD RESPECT. Va-yisha (and he had respect) follows the paradigm of va-yichar (and he was wroth) in And Cain was very wroth (va-yichar). 7 They are both shortened forms of the verb. The final heh of the root is dropped and the first root letter is vocalized with a pattach because it precedes a root letter (Filwarg). See notes to 3:22. Va-yisha means, and he accepted. She'u in Look away (she'u) from me (Is. 22:4) is close in meaning to it. They brought offerings in keeping with the secret meaning of the sacrificial ritual. 8 Cf. I.E.'s comment on Lev. 1:1. Weiser explains that I.E. believed that sacrifices were offered to gain some benefit. Cf. I.E. on Ex. 12:7. It is possible that a fire came down from heaven and consumed Abel's sacrifice but not Cain's.I believe that yamim (time) (v. 3) means a full year. Scripture similarly states, for a full year (yamim) shall he have the right of redemption (Lev. 25:29). A year is called yamim (days) because it indicates that the full cycle of days, both long and short, has been completed. From year to year (mi-yamim yamimah) (Ex. 13:10) is similar. The meaning of shenatayim yamim (two full years) (Gen. 41:1) is two complete years from day to day. Had Scripture read shenatayim (two years), then it would possibly not have meant two full years from day to day. 9 It could have meant close to two years, two years being a round number. Similarly ad chodesh yamim (but a whole month) (Num. 11:20) refers to a complete cycle of the moon. I therefore maintain that when the prophet Daniel prophesied a thousand, two hundred and ninety days (yamim) (Dan. 12:11), he meant days and not years. I say this because the days (yamim) are enumerated. 10 When the word yamim stands by itself, it means a complete year (all the days). When numbers are given it refers to days. Otherwise one could not know whether sheloshah yamim means three years or three days (Filwarg).

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

SHALL IT NOT. Many commentators explain se'et (be lifted up) to mean thy sins will be forgiven. 11 Se'et means forgiveness as in noseh avon (forgiving iniquity) (Ex. 34:7). Cf. Onkelos and Kimchi. However, it appears to me that se'et means thy face will be lifted up. For it is previously written, and his countenance fell (v. 5). And his countenance fell indicates shame, as in how then should I hold up my face (esah panai) (II Sam. 2:22). 12 Which shows that one who is ashamed cannot hold his face up. The meaning of our verse is: if you will do good, then you will lift up your face. Surely then shalt thou lift up thy face (tissa fanekha) without spot (Job 11:15) is similar.
SIN COUCHETH. Some say that chattat (sin) is used here in place of avon (iniquity). 13 Scripture writes, Sin coucheth (chattat rovetz). The problem is that sin is a feminine noun and rovetz is a masculine verb. The phrase should read chattat rovetzet, hence the comment that chattat has been substituted for avon. They mean the same thing (Krinsky). The printed texts have chet. However, the Bible has chattat, Vat. Ebr. 38 has chattat, and we have followed suit. There are also those who explain this clause to mean that thy iniquity (sin) will couch over thy grave at the day of judgment. They further explain the pronominal suffix of teshukato (its desire) as referring to Abel. Its meaning is, why are you wroth that I accepted Abel's sacrifice since he is obligated to obey thee (ve-elekha teshukato), and thou art a ruler over him? 14 I.E. explains

teshukah as meaning obedience. See his comment on Gen. 3:16. Cain was a "ruler" over Abel because he was the older brother. One cannot explain and unto thee is its desire as referring to iniquity since iniquity is not a person. Others say that the pronominal suffix of teshukato (its desire) refers to the impulse (yetzer) even though this impulse (yetzer) is not mentioned in this verse. These commentators explain sin coucheth at the door as meaning that your sin lies in wait at the door of your house and is always with you. Others interpret door (petach) as referring to the door of the mouth, as in Keep the doors (pitche) of thy mouth (Micah 7:5). 15 Man can sin even with his mouth (Filwarg). However, in my opinion the word chattat (sin) in sin coucheth at the door is in the construct, and it is the impulse of man's heart that "coucheth" with him. 16 Chattat is in the construct with yetzer (impulse). However, the word yetzer is not in the text and has to be supplied by the reader. In other words, chattat is short for chattat ha-yetzer. This eliminates the problem of a feminine noun (chattat) having a masculine verb (rovetz). The clause should thus be understood: the sin of the impulse of your heart coucheth at the door; that is, it is always with you.
AND UNTO THEE IS ITS DESIRE. If you will it, then your impulse (yetzer) will obey you. 17 I.E. explains teshukah (desire) as obedience (see note 14). Hence its desire means its obedience, the "it" referring to yetzer (impulse). Additionally, you have the power to rule over it.

Verse 8

AND CAIN SPOKE. It appears to me that Cain related to Abel the full account of the rebuke with which God had reproached him. Those born on a dark day ask, how did Cain kill Abel since no swords were yet in existence? This is a foolish question. He could have choked him or killed him with a stone or a piece of wood inasmuch as there were thousands of stones and chunks of wood around.

Verse 9

[WHERE.] Ay (where) means the same as ayeh. The word ayfo (where) is a combination of two words. 18 Where (ayeh) and here (poh), i.e., in what place.

Verse 10

CRIETH UNTO ME. Crieth unto Me is not connected to voice of (kol). 19 It is connected to thy brother's blood. Kol (voice) is singular, tzo'akim (crieth out) is a plural; thus tzo'akim cannot refer to kol. It is thus connected to blood of, which is a plural (Krinsky). Similarly in Hark, my beloved (kol dodi)! behold, he cometh, (Cant. 2:8), he cometh is connected to my beloved, 20 Rather than to voice of (kol). Cometh is connected to my beloved because it is the beloved who leaps and skips, not the voice; the voice neither leaps nor skips (Krinsky). Hinneh zeh ba can be translated as, behold, he cometh, or behold it cometh. as I have pointed out in my commentary on Canticles. The meaning of our verse is: I have heard the cry of your brother's blood that was poured out upon the ground. However, Onkelos interprets thy brother's blood as referring to the potential descendants of Abel. 21 Hence the plural deme (blood of). Cf. Rashi.

Verse 11

AND NOW CURSED ART THOU FROM THE GROUND. Cain, a tiller of the soil, suffered a loss with regard to the ground. 22 I.E. interprets curse to mean a diminution of the good. See his comment on 3:14. He sowed and

planted but the earth no longer yielded fruits or harvest. Cain was forced to wander far from the dwelling place of his father, Adam, who lived close to the Garden of Eden. He was never to find rest in one place but was constantly to be on the move.

Verse 12

[AND A WANDERER.] Some explain nad (wanderer) to mean a mourner, as in to bemoan (la-nud) him (Job 2:11). However, my opinion is that nad is a synonym for na (fugitive). Nedod (wander) in Lo, then would I wander (nedod) far off (Ps. 55:8) is analogous.

Verse 13

[MY PUNISHMENT 23 Literally, avoni (my sin). IS GREATER THAN I CAN BEAR.] All the commentaries explain this to mean that Cain confessed his sin. They say that the meaning of neso (bear) is forgiveness, as in forgiving iniquity (noseh avon) (Ex. 34:7). 24 These commentators translate avon literally and render our clause as: my iniquity (avon) is beyond (gadol) forgiveness (mi-neso). However, I disagree. In Hebrew reward is called ekev (heel), and the harsh punishment which comes as a result of iniquity is occasionally referred to as "sin." Similarly we find, for the iniquity (avon) of the Amorite is not yet full 25 The time of their punishment has not arrived. (Gen. 15:16); there shall no punishment (avon) happen to thee (I Sam. 28:10); For the iniquity (avon) of the daughter of my people is greater than the sin of Sodom (Lamentations 4:6). 26 According to I.E. avon (iniquity) should be rendered punishment. The verse thus means: the punishment of my people is severer than the punishment of Sodom (Krinsky). The meaning of our verse thus is: my punishment (avon) is greater than I can bear (mi-neso). The next verse substantiates this interpretation. 27 Cain in verse 14 complains of his unfortunate plight. This shows that verse 13 is to be similarly interpreted.
Patzetah (v.11) is to be rendered opened. Yiftzeh (doth open) in But Job doth open (yiftzeh) his mouth in vanity (Job 35:16) is similar.

Verse 14

[AND FROM THY FACE SHALL I BE HID.] All the world is full of God's glory. Nevertheless, there are places more receptive to God's power, and His might is seen there.

Verse 15

SEVENFOLD. Until seven generations, for shivatayim (sevenfold) does not mean fourteen, 28 Some render shivatayim as seven multiplied by two. They consider it a dual form like shenatayim, (two years) which is shanah (a year) multiplied by two. nor does it mean three hundred and forty-three. 29 Some render shivatayim as seven multiplied by seven, multiplied by seven. Proof that shivatayim means sevenfold is that the prophet states, And the light of the sun shall be sevenfold (shivatayim) and then explains his words, viz., as the light of the seven days (Is. 30:26). 30 Thus shivatayim means seven days or seven times as much.
[VENGEANCE SHALL BE TAKEN ON HIM.] The meaning of yukkam (vengeance shall be taken on him) is that vengeance shall be exacted from him. He shall not be punished (yukkam) (Ex. 21:21) is similar. 31 Literally, vengeance shall not be taken on him. The meaning of our verse is that God held back his anger and waited seven generations before punishing Cain. 32 The verse is to be understood as follows: Cain shall be punished after seven generations. Don't ask, how could Cain's life span extend for seven

generations? Behold, his brother Seth lived many years with Noah. 33 Noah was the tenth generation from Adam. Thus Seth lived for more than seven generations. It is also possible that Cain's descendants are called Cain after their patriarch in the same way that Jews are called Israel. 34 The meaning of the verse being: Cain's descendants would bear his guilt. Some say that the sign the Lord set for Cain was a horn. Others say God removed fear from Cain's heart and gave him courage to face the world. It appears to me that God gave Cain a sign that no harm would befall him. 35 As he did to Gideon. Cf. Jud. 6. Cain finally believed God because of the sign. 36 As Gideon did. Scripture, however, does not tell us what the sign was.

Verse 16

IN THE LAND OF NOD. The land of Nod is so called because it was in that land that Cain was a wanderer and a fugitive. 37 See verse 12.
ON THE EAST SIDE OF EDEN. East of Eden and north of the garden. 38 Ibn Ezra held that the inhabited world developed north of Eden. See Chap. II, note 37.

Verse 17

[ENOCH.] The city was called after Enoch, the son of Cain. Similarly the city of Samaria was called after Shemer (I Kings 16:24) and Egypt (mitzraim) was named for Mitzraim, son of Ham. 39 Cf. Gen. 10:6. This is not explicitly stated in Scripture. I.E. assumes that it was so (Weiser).

Verse 18

Lamech was the seventh generation from Adam and the sixth from Cain. 40 Hence it was from Lamech's children that vengeance would be exacted for Abel's murder.

Verse 19

[ADAH AND…ZILLAH.] Do not pay attention to Saadiah Gaon's interpretation of Biblical names. Even if we knew Hebrew perfectly, how would we be able to ascertain the events which they commemorate? If the Bible did not state why Moses was named Moses, or Issaschar, Issaschar, would we be able to surmise the meaning of these names? 41 A literal translation of a Biblical name does not reveal its meaning.

Verse 20

[THE FATHER OF SUCH AS DWELL IN TENTS.] The meaning of avi (father of) is first. The same is true of the word av (father) 42 The father (av) is first, i.e., is born before his son. and the word (aviv) (spring). 43 The first fruits appear in aviv (spring). When the word for father is in the construct it always has a yod suffixed to it. The same is true with the word for brother. 44 Singulars in the construct usually do not have a yod suffixed to them, hence I.E.'s comment that father of is avi, brother of is achi.

Verse 21

THE HARP AND PIPE. Harp and pipe (kinnor ve-ugav) are types of musical instruments. The ability to play these instruments requires great wisdom. 45 The ancients considered music not only a skill but a wisdom, or what we would call an art.

Verse 22

THE FORGER. Lotesh (the forger) means the sharpener. Li-litosh in to sharpen (li-litosh) every man his plowshare (I Sam. 13:20) is similar.

Verse 23

[AND LAMECH SAID…] Note, this 46 Verses 23 and 24. The reason is that I.E. understands verses 23 and 24 to be an attempt by Lamech to induce his wives to cohabit with him. However, verses 20 through 22 tell us that they in fact did so. Hence verses 23 and 24 must describe what happened before verses 20-22. Its meaning is that Lamech had already said to Adah and Zillah. Va-yomer is thus a pluperfect (Krinsky). should have appeared earlier. I have already noted two similar examples of this in my earlier comments. 47 See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 1:9. Three additional examples are: that the man took a golden ring (Gen. 24:22); 48 This is followed by: and said: Whose daughter art thou (Gen. 24:23). Now, would the servant give a golden ring to the girl before asking her who she was? Therefore Gen. 24:23 must be rendered: And he already said, Whose daughter art thou (Krinsky). And the Lord said unto Moses, say unto the children of Israel: Ye are a stiff-necked people (Ex. 33:5); 49 This is preceded by: And when the people heard these evil tidings (v. 4). However, the evil tidings are reported in verse 5. Thus verse 5 should precede verse 4. Hence the meaning of And when the people heard (v. 4) is: and when the people had heard; i.e., when they heard the following, namely what is reported in the next verse (Meijler). and And I besought the Lord at that time (Deut. 3:23). 50 Cf. I.E.'s comment on Deut. 3:23. What is reported in this verse took place before Deut. 3:21, viz., And I commanded Joshua, etc. Moses besought God before he commanded Joshua not to fear the kings of Canaan. Hence Deut. 3:23 is to be rendered as And I had besought the Lord. Ibid. I. E.'s commentary. As to our verse, it is to be interpreted as our sages did. The rabbis tell us that Adah and Zillah were afraid to bear children because they feared that their offspring, who were the seventh generation from Cain, would die or be killed as punishment for Cain's sin. Therefore Lamech said to them, "I am in truth the seventh generation 51 From Cain. However, in truth Lamech lied to them. He was the sixth and not the seventh generation from Cain (Filwarg). and if a man would wound me or a child bruise me, then I would kill them." I have slain is used in place of I will slay. 52 Haragti is a perfect. Similar examples are: I will give (natati) 53 Literally, I gave. the price of the field (Gen. 23:13), and which I took out 54 According to I.E., I took (lakachti) means I will take. of the hand of the Amorite (Gen. 48:22). There are many similar instances. 55 The point is that the Bible occasionally uses a perfect in place of an imperfect.
Lamech said to his wives, If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold because Cain deliberately murdered and he, Lamech, did not. 56 If Cain, who committed willful murder, had his punishment deferred for seven generations, I who did not kill anyone shall not be punished for a very long time (Krinsky). Hence you have nothing to fear from having children with me. In other words, Lamech told his wives that the decree upon Cain was annulled. However, the fact of the matter is that Lamech's children and all his seed perished in the deluge. Thus Cain's name was wiped out because he murdered his brother.

Verse 24

Verse 25

[INSTEAD OF ABEL.] That is, in place of Abel.

Verse 26

[BEGAN TO CALL.] Huchal (began) belongs to those verbs whose second and third root letters are identical. 57 Its root is chet, lamed, lamed. If the chet were not a guttural, it would receive a dagesh. Huchal comes from the same root as techil'ah (first). The meaning of the clause then began (huchal) men to call upon the name of the Lord is: then men first started praying. If huchal were derived from chillul (profane), 58 Cf. Rashi: " Huchal is an expression of profaneness." then the name of the Lord would follow profane. 59 If huchal means to profane, the verse reads as follows: then was it profaned to call the name of God. An impossible sentence. If huchal means profaned, the verse should read: then was God's name profaned.

Chapter 5

Verse 1

THIS IS THE BOOK OF THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM. The children and grandchildren that he begot. 1 Toledot (generations) comes from the root yod, lamed, dalet. In the hifil it means to give birth to. Adam and only Adam had no human parents, for he was created by God in the likeness of God. 2 I.E. explains that in the likeness of God made He him (Adam) indicates that in contrast to his descendants Adam had no human parents but was created directly by God.

Verse 2

Verse 3

Scripture notes that Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image (v. 3) 3 All living creatures produce offspring that resemble them. Therefore, why mention that Adam produced offspring resembling him? to teach us that God implanted in Adam the power to reproduce his God like image so that his work would be like that of God. 4 The image and likeness spoken of in the verse refer not to man's physical image but to his God-like image. The Bible notes that Adam, like God, was able to produce children in the image of God. Scripture does not say the same with regard to Cain and Abel, nor does it state how long Cain lived or how old Cain was when he begot his son Enoch. It omits the above clause because the former was murdered and the latter's descendants perished in the deluge. 5 The lines of both Cain and Abel were wiped out. But the Bible notes these things with regard to Seth because Noah was descended from him. The Torah tells the story of the murderer Cain to stress God's righteousness. God was long-suffering with Cain but he ultimately punished him. This is in keeping with and that (God) will by no means clear the guilty (Ex. 34:7).

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

ENOCH. Son of Jared. Scripture says about Enoch, And Enoch walked with God. The meaning of this is the same as the meaning of After the Lord your God shall ye walk (Deut. 13:5). 6 Live righteously. Similarly Enoch lived righteously. The same thing is stated concerning Noah, namely, Noah walked with God (Gen. 6:9). Others say that Noah walked with God means he trained himself to walk with God. 7 Walked (hithal'ekh) is in the hitpa'el. The latter is a reflexive; thus hithal'ekh means he made himself walk; i.e., he trained himself to walk. These commentaries say the same with regard to Enoch (I.E.'s fragmentary commentary on Genesis).

Verse 23

Verse 24

AND HE WAS NOT; FOR GOD TOOK HIM. That is, he died. So, too, take, I beseech Thee, my life from me (Jonah 4:3). Scripture similarly states, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes (Ezek. 24:16) and then explains its meaning, namely, his wife died (Ezek. 24:18). The Bible does not state with regard to Enoch's being taken that Enoch died, nor is there any reference to a plague causing his death. The meaning of took him in our verse is similar to take me in the psalm of Asaph, And afterward take me with glory (Ps. 73:24), and He shall take me, in the psalm of the sons of Korach, But God will redeem my soul from the power of the netherworld; For He shall take me (Ps. 49:16). The intelligent will understand this. 8 God gave immortality to Enoch. Cf. I.E.'s comments on Ps. 49:16: "taking…refers to the union of the soul of the pious with the heavenly beings who are incorporeal and immortal."

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

[THIS SAME SHALL COMFORT US.] Lamech was informed by Adam, who was a prophet, that through his newborn child the land would live. Or perhaps they learned the aforementioned through astrology. And so it was, for it was through Noah that the world was preserved. Furthermore, Noah was, as

the Bible explicitly states, an expert in agriculture (Gen. 9:20). 9 This is I.E.'s explanation of ish ha'adamah (a husbandman). Cf. his comments on Gen. 9:20. Krinsky explains that Noah introduced agricultural implements and other advances in working the soil. This is an additional example of Noah giving "life" to the land It is also possible that he got this name after 10 He originally had another name. his agricultural successes. We find the same with Jerubbaal. 11 His original name was Gideon but he was subsequently called Jerubbaal after breaking the alter of Baal (Jud. 6:32). Noah (rest) is the opposite of toil (etzavon). The meaning of our verse is, this one will comfort us and we will rest (nanu'ach) from the toil of our hands. Moreover, comfort is a relaxation of the heart's pain. 12 The Bible tells us that Noah was so called because Lamech said, This one should comfort us. However, if this was the case he should have named his son Menachem or Nahum which comes from the root nun, chet, mem, meaning to comfort. Noah comes from the root nun, vav, chet, meaning rest, hence I.E.'s comment that he was called Noah because comfort and rest are related. The Hebrews are more concerned with the idea expressed by a word than with its etymology. Proof of the above is the fact that Jerubbaal is referred to as Jerubbesheth. 13 Gideon was called Jerubbaal, meaning "Let Baal contend against him" (Jud. 6:32). In II Sam. 11:21 he is called Jerubbesheth. Boshet is Hebrew for shame. This was an undignified way of referring to Baal. Nevertheless, Jerubbaal and Jerubbesheth express the same idea. In the same way Noah expresses the same idea as Menachem. Those who ask whom Cain and Seth married raise a worthless question. Scripture tells us that Adam begot sons and daughters. The same is true of all of them. 14 The antediluvian patriarchs prior to Lamech all married their sisters.

Chapter 6

Verse 1

[BEGAN.] Hechel (began) is a hifil. It is a denominative of techillah (beginning).
TO MULTIPLY. La-rov (to multiply) is an infinitive.

Verse 2

THE SONS OF GOD. The term bene Elohim (the sons of god) refers to the sons of the judges who dispensed God's (Elohim) justice. 1 See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 1:1. Others say that Elohim refers to God Himself and the sons of God are holy ones (saints) living on earth. They are called sons of God in the sense of Ye are the children of the Lord your God (Deut. 14:1). Others say that the sons of God refers to the children of Seth 2 Concerning whom it is written that he was created in God's image. See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 5:1. and that the daughters of man refers to women of Cain's family. 3 Concerning whom it was not written that he was created in the image of God. See previous note. However, it appears to me that the sons of God refers to those who know the will of the most High. These men chose women who matched them astrologically and physically. Hence they produced mighty men. It is possible that they took women even against their will. 4 And they took them wives implies they took women against their will. If, according to astrology, a given women was fit for a man, he took her even against her will (Krinsky).

Verse 3

MY SPIRIT SHALL NOT ABIDE. Some say that yadon (shall abide) is like the word nedanah (sheath thereof), as in and he put up his sword back into the sheath thereof (nedanah) (I Chron. 21:27), for the body serves as a sheath for the spirit. 5 The meaning of the phrase is: my spirit will not forever be in its sheath (the human body); i.e., man will die (Kimchi). Proof of this is found in my spirit was pained in the midst of my body (nidneh) (Dan. 7:15). Nevertheless, nadan and yadon come from different roots. 6 Yadon (shall abide) comes from the root dalet, vav, nun. Nadan comes from the root nun, dalet, nun. We find the same with the words nasah (lifted) and si'o (his excellency). We read, Though his excellency (si'o) mount up to the heavens (Job 20:6). The root of si'o is sin, vav, alef. Nevertheless, a word derived from nasah (lifted) (whose root is nun, sin, alef) would have a similar meaning. There are many examples of this. Others say that yadon follows the paradigm of ve-yashov (returneth), as in And the dust returneth (ve-yashov) to the earth as it was (Eccles. 12:7). 7 An ayin, vav is usually vocalized with a shuruk, as in yakum (he will arise). Yadon is vocalized with a cholam. I.E. points out that the same is true with returneth. It, too, is vocalized ve-yashov, rather than ve-yashuv. Ve-yashov comes from the root shin, vav, bet. It, too, is an ayin, vav. They say that yadon comes from the same root as din (to judge) because the spirit judges the body. 8 Man's spirit (ru'ach) ultimately determines how man will act. God said that this "judge" will not remain united with the body; i.e., man would die. Krinsky explains it differently. He says the meaning of the verse is: my spirit (the spirit which I placed in man) will not judge man; i.e., man follows his evil inclinations. He acts without discernment. He follows the way of the flesh rather than that of the spirit. It appears that he will continually do so, therefore… Cherez explains, God's spirit judges man. The meaning of the verse is: my spirit will not judge men forever; i.e., I have decided on their punishment.

FOR THAT HE IS ALSO. In the word be-shaggam (for that also) the shin placed before gam (also) has the same meaning as the shin placed before kakhah (thus). 9 It means that. The shin of be-shaggam is a particle of relation, short for asher. In other words, there is no such word as shaggam. I.E. makes this point because the shin which means that is usually vocalized with a segol, while the shin of shaggam is vocalized with a pattach. The term My spirit refers to God's spirit, for man's spirit comes from God. Similarly, And the spirit returneth unto God who gave it (Eccles. 12:7). The spirit spoken of by Ecclesiastes refers only to the spirit in man. The meaning of the verse is: My spirit shall not abide in man because of his violent ways and because he is (be-shaggem) made of flesh, grows until he achieves maturity, and then due to his sexual activity begins his decline. 10 Krinsky and Weiser. This is the second time I.E. has noted that the man begins his decline with sexual maturity (cf. Gen. 3:8). Perhaps I.E. held to the medieval belief that emission of semen weakens the body.

THEREFORE SHALL HIS DAYS BE A HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS. Some explain that this refers to man's life span. 11 Henceforth man's life span will be limited to 120 years. If we find some living longer than this, 12 Chap. 11 lists the descendants of Noah. All of them lived more than 120 years and were born subsequent to this decree (Cherez). they are but a few. Our verse speaks of most people. However, this interpretation is not correct. Behold, Shem lived for six hundred years. Also, the generations that followed him lived many, many years beyond a hundred and twenty. It was only in the days of Peleg (Gen. 10:25) that the life span was shortened. From the days of King David onward it has been limited to seventy or eighty years. The correct meaning of therefore shall his days be a hundred and twenty years is as Onkelos explained, namely, that God set a time for mankind to repent. We see the same idea in Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown (Jonah 3:4). God gave them one hundred and

twenty years in which to repent and save themselves, or to remain unrepentant and perish. Scripture's statement, And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah begot Shem, Ham and Japheth (Gen. 5:32), should not disturb you, 13 Gen. 5:32 tells us that Noah was 500 years old when he had his children. Gen. 6:3 tells us, according to I.E., that man has 120 years in which to repent. Gen. 7:6 tells us that the flood came in the 600th year of Noah's life. Thus between the statement in Gen. 6:3 and the flood there is at the very most 100 years (cf. Rashi), hence I.E.'s interpretation that Gen. 6:3 occurred before Gen. 5:32. because the Bible is not in chronological sequence. 14 In other words, Gen. 6:3 deals with events that came before those dealt with in Gen. 5:32. Note, the Torah states, and Terah died in Haran (Gen. 11:32), then goes on to say, Now the Lord said unto Abram: Get thee out of thy country (Gen. 12:1). However, we know that Terah did not die until Isaac was thirty-five years old. 15 Many years after Abraham left his country. Terah, who lived to be 205 years, was 70 when Abraham was born (Gen. 11:26). Abraham was a hundred when Isaac was born (Gen. 21:5). Thus Terah was 170 when Isaac was born, and 205 when Isaac was 35. There are many other similar instances in Scripture.

Verse 4

[THE NEPHILIM.] They were so named because anyone who saw them lost heart at their huge stature. 16 From the root nun, feh, lamed, meaning to fall. [AFTER THAT.] After the flood. Behold, the sons of Anak (Num. 13:33) were originally from the family of the sons of God. 17 Thus we see that the descendants of the nephilim lived on after the flood.

Verse 5

Verse 6

AND IT REPENTED THE LORD. The Torah spoke in the language of men, 18 In other words, And it repented is an anthropomorphism. for we know that God is not a man that he should repent. This term is used because if a human being acted in the way God did, destroying his creation, it would be said of him that he repented. 19 Maimonides terms this an attribute of action. Cf. Guide To the Perplexed, Part I, Chap. 52.
[AND IT GRIEVED HIM AT HIS HEART.] This verse is the opposite of Let the Lord rejoice in His works (Ps. 104:31). God is said to be happy when his creatures benefit from his acts of kindness. 20 And is described as being grieved when He must punish them. In other words, happy and sad are anthropomorphisms. Others say that va-yinnachem (and it repented) should be rendered as set a time, 21 Ibn Ezra uses an Arabic term which Krinsky translates as setting a time. This eliminates the anthropomorphism in the verse. However, this interpretation is problematic. For the problems inherent in it see Weiser. as in doth comfort (mitnachem) himself, purposing to kill thee (Gen. 27:42). 22 Which should be rendered: Esau has set a time to kill you. See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 27:42. They also say that His heart does not refer to the heart of God but to the heart of the prophet. 23 They felt uncomfortable with a verse that speaks of God's heart. Hence they interpreted this verse to mean God told the prophet that he wanted to destroy mankind and the prophet was grieved. However, if this were the case Scripture should not have read: and it grieved "at" (el) His heart. 24 It should have read, and it grieved His heart, i.e., His prophet. Secondly, where do we find a prophet called a heart?

Verse 7

AND THE LORD SAID. In His heart, or to the angels; others say, to Noah. However, it appears to me that And the Lord said is connected to His heart of the previous verse. 25 I.E. argues that the meaning of And the Lord said is the Lord said in his heart. However, in his heart is missing in this verse, hence I.E.'s comment.

Verse 8

GRACE. Chen (grace) means mercy. From it we get the word techinnah (supplication). 26 The supplicant seeks mercy. Also, the word techinnah is used in the sense of mercy in Ezra 9:8. Grace usually implies beauty, hence I.E.'s comment. Chen follows the paradigm of ketz (end); both have roots whose second and third letters are the same. 27 Ketz (end) comes from a three letter double root (kefulim), kaf, tzadi, tzadi. Chen (grace) similarly comes from a double root, chet, nun, nun. Both ketz and chen drop the final letter of the root. The meaning of found grace (mercy or pity) in the eyes of the Lord is like No eye pitied thee (Ezek. 16:5). 28 Finding grace in God's eyes means that God took pity on a person (Filwarg). I.E. shows that the Bible connects mercy with the eye. The eye is said to take or not to take pity.

Verse 9

THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS. Toledot (generations) means the events that transpired during his lifetime, as in what a day may bring forth (yeled) (Prov. 27:1). These are the generations of Jacob (Gen. 37:2) is similar.
A MAN RIGHTEOUS. In his deeds.
AND WHOLE-HEARTED. In his heart. Tamim (wholehearted) is an adjective. It belongs to those roots whose second and third letters are the same. All three letters of the root remain in this word. 29 The root of wholehearted is taf, mem, mem. This root gives birth both to tam (wholehearted) and tamim (wholehearted). In the former, a mem is dropped. In the latter, the whole root is found in the word. I.E. employs a pun. He says tamim is tamim. According to I.E. tamim is an adjective modifying man (Filwarg, Krinsky and Cherez).
[IN HIS GENERATIONS.] At the time of the flood, and in the generations after the flood. For Noah lived till the fifty-eighth year of Abraham. 30 Seder Olam, Chap. I. Noah was 600 at the time of the flood. Shem begat Arpachshad two years after the flood. From Arpachshad's birth to Abraham's birth was 290 years. Noah lived to be 950. Thus Abraham was 58 when Noah died. Let this be a mnemonic device, our father Abraham was the age of Noah (58) 31 A play on words. Noah (nun, chet) is numerically equivalant to 58. Hence ben Noah means 58 years old. Abraham was the age Noah (58) when Noah died. when Noah died.

Verse 10

Verse 11

AND THE EARTH WAS CORRUPT. The people of the earth were corrupt. Similarly, when a land sinneth against Me (Ezek. 14:13), and And all countries came into Egypt (Gen. 41:57).
[BEFORE GOD.] Some say this means they sinned in public. Others say it means people were privately corrupt with regard to secret affairs so that only God was aware of their sins. In my opinion, the Torah speaks the language of men so that people will understand what is being said. The meaning of before God is that they acted like a servant, who in the

presence of his master, disobeys him and thereby shows that he does not fear him. Those who say that Elohim (God) does not refer to the Almighty are speaking nonsense. 32 They say that Elohim refers to judges.
VIOLENCE. Theft, oppression and taking women against their will.

Verse 12

Our sages are correct in interpreting for all flesh had corrupted their way to mean that all flesh engaged in unnatural and perverted sexual acts. Indeed, how precious is their interpretation to the effect that they corrupted with water 33 An allusion to semen. Cf. Sanhedrin 108b. and were punished by God with water. Just as they placed their waters above and below, 34 An allusion to homosexuality (Krinsky). so God punished them by a flood whose waters came from above and below.

Verse 13

AND GOD SAID UNTO NOAH: THE END OF ALL FLESH. All bodies.
[IS COME BEFORE ME.] The time of their calamity has arrived.
WITH THE EARTH. Et ha'aretz (with the earth) means from the earth. Similarly, As soon as I am gone out of the city (et ha'ir) (Ex. 9:29). It may also be rendered, with the earth, as in with Jacob (et Yaakov) every man came with his household (Ex. 1:1). 35 Et is usually the sign of the accusative. Thus this clause should be rendered: I will destroy them, the earth. This translation is impossible, hence I.E.'s comment. It appears to me that mashchitam (I will destroy them) stands for two words. Similarly, the word God in O God of hosts (Ps. 80:8) and thy throne in thy throne God (Ps. 45:7). 36 See above, Gen. 2:19, mosekh atzmo, etc. Ps. 80:8 reads, Elohim Tzeva'ot (literally, God hosts). It should read, Elohe Tzeva'ot (God of hosts). Hence Elohim is to be read as if written twice, Elohim Elohe Tzeva'ot (God, God of hosts). Similarly kisakha Elohim (Ps. 45:7) is ungrammatical. It must be read, kisakhakha kisse Elohim (Thy throne, God's throne). The meaning of our verse is: And, behold, I will destroy them and destroy the earth.

Verse 14

GOPHER. Gopher is the name of a wood that rides lightly upon the water. It is mentioned nowhere else in Scripture.
ROOMS. So that each animal, cattle and fowl would be alone with its mate.
[ARK.] The Bible uses the term ark and not ship, for it did not have the shape of a ship nor did it have oars.
AND SHALT PITCH IT. Some say that ve-khafarta (and shalt pitch) comes from the same root as kapporet (cover) (Ex. 25:17), the meaning of and shalt pitch it being you shall cover it by coating it. [PITCH.] Some say that kofer is a pitch-like substance. Others say that a certain clay with pitch-like qualities is found in the ground and is to be identified with the kofer in our verse. Others identify it with a substance similarly called in Arabic while noting that in Arabic it is spelled with a kof rather than a caf. In reality, ve-khafarta (and shalt pitch) is a denominative of kofer. 37 Hebrew has many such verbs. According to I.E., ve-khafarta does not mean to merely cover (as claimed by the earlier opinion who connected it to kappore t) but to cover with kofer, whatever it is.
WITHIN. On the inside.

Verse 15

AND THIS IS HOW THOU SHALT MAKE IT. These are the dimensions which you shall make it. Its height was a tenth of its length, so that it would be able to float on the water and not be overturned by the wind.

Verse 16

A LIGHT. Tzohar (a light) means an opening through which light would enter. It comes from the same root as tzohorayim (noon). 38 The time of the day when light is at its fullest. The opening was made in the usual place, on top of the ark. 39 Hence Scripture does not tell us where it was placed. Scripture tells us that the top of the ark was a cubit in length. 40 According to I.E. and to a cubit shalt thou finish it upward applies to the top of the roof of the ark. See Rashi. We gather from this that it was a sixth of a cubit wide. 41 The width of the ark was one-sixth the length. The ark was triangular in shape. 42 According to Luzzato, this applies only to the roof of the ark. See Luzzato's commentary on the Pentateuch, p. 42. However, a literal reading of I.E. does not support this view. Its top came to a point, and so did its corners. Therefore it did not overturn. The door was on one side 43 Unlike other ships which are entered through the deck (Krinsky). and was reached by climbing a ladder. 44 The door was on the third top of the ark (Krinsky). Now, we know that the ark was very large. 45 Hence it was able to contain representatives of all species. Furthermore, it is possible that Noah was much taller than we, for the cubits mentioned with regard to the ark are Noah's cubits. 46 A cubit is the span from shoulder to fingertips. Since Noah was taller than we, his cubits were longer. The ark was thus even larger than a superficial reading of Scripture indicates. It is also possible, since the ark was divided into three stories, that the bottom story was ten cubits high. 47 And similarly each of the other two stories (Weiser). Some say that the ark had many stories and that Scripture abridged the number.
LOWER, SECOND AND THIRD. These are all adjectives. Those who ask why shelishim (third) is not written selishiyyim have eyes but do not see. 48 Tachtiyyim (lower) and sheniyyim (second) are written with a dagesh in the yod ; shelishim is not. The question arises, why not? The dagesh forte doubles the letter. Can't they see that forgiving, archer and thief are adjectives, 49 Sallach (forgiving), kashat (archer) and gannav (thief) follow the paradigm of pattach, kamatz. For a comment on I.E.'s grammatical usage, see Chap. 1, note 33. as are prince, deputy, pious, 50 Nagid (prince), pakid (deputy) and chasid (pious) follow the paradigm of kamatz, chirik. wise 51 Chacham (wise) follows the paradigm of kamatz, kamatz. and understanding? 52 Navon (understanding) follows the paradigm of kamatz, cholam. Nevertheless, each of these words is vocalized according to its own pattern and form. Shelishim (third) follows the paradigm of negidim (princes) and chasidim (pious). This is so because the singular of shelishim is shalish, as the singular of chasidim is chasid. 53 Thus shalish belongs to the same group as chasid and nagid and its plural takes their form. Hence shalish follows a different paradigm than does tachat and sheni and this is why it does not have a dagesh in the yod. It is also possible that the dagesh in the yod of sheniyyim (second) also 54 See above note 48. applies to the yod of shelishim (third). 55 It now has a dagesh. It is thus to be pronounced shelishiyyim. Perhaps this will satisfy those who raised the question.

Verse 17

AND I. Some say that the dagesh in mabbul (flood) is in place of a missing nun, 56 The root of mabbul is nun, bet, lamed. The nun is thus missing. as in the word mabbua (fountain). 57 The root of mabbu'a (fountain) is nun, bet, ayn. The dagesh is in place of the missing nun.

They note that the word mabbul comes from the same root as navelah (fadeth) 58 Naval means to fade, wither or fall. According to this, mabbul comes from the root nun, bet, lamed and means a destruction. in The earth fainteth and fadeth (navelah) away (Is. 24:4). Others say that mabbul comes from the same root as balul (mingled) in mingled (belulah) with oil, 59 In other words the root of flood is bet, lamed, lamed. The word mabbul thus means a mixing or confounding. and that it should have followed the paradigm of maslul (highway) (Is. 35:8). 60 The root of maslul (highway) is samekh, lamed, lamed. Similarly the word for flood should be mavlul. The word massor (saw) (Is. 10:15) 61 Which comes from the root sin, resh, resh (cf. Is. 15:10) and does not follow the paradigm of maslul. Hence mabbul is similar to massor (Cherez). For alternate interpretations see Weiser and Krinsky. with a shuruk and a cholam 62 If mabbul and massor are alike then both should be vocalized either with a cholam or a shuruk. interchanging is analogous.
[THE FLOOD OF WATERS.] This is an abridged phrase. It should be read as follows: The flood, a flood of waters. 63 The Hebrew reads ha-mabbul mayim. Ha-mabbul cannot be in the construct with waters because a word with a definite article cannot be in the construct, hence I.E.'s comment. Similarly the meaning of since the day it was founded (Ex. 9:18) is: since the day, the day it was founded. 64 Here, too, ha-yom (the day), which has a definite article, cannot be in the construct with hivvasedah (it was founded).

Verse 18

BUT I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT. This indicates, although not previously mentioned, that God had sworn earlier to Noah that he and his children would not die in the flood. 65 But I will establish my covenant means I will keep my promise. Hence a promise was already made. We find a similar instance in Deuteronomy, viz., Let us send men before us, that they may search the land for us (Deut. 1:22). 66 Of Scripture omitting a fact and then mentioning it later, see Num. 13:2. But I will establish means I will keep my oath. However, it appears to me that the covenant alludes to the covenant that would be made at the time God set the rainbow in the sky. 67 In contradistinction to what I.E. had just noted, he now suggests that the covenant does not refer to a previous covenant but to one yet to be made. Covenant means an agreement and a thing which two sides choose. It comes from the same root as beru (choose) in choose (beru) you a man for you (I Sam. 17:8). 68 Brit (covenant) comes from the root bet, resh, resh, meaning to choose. The word for covenant (brit) has this form and vocalization both in the absolute and in the construct. We find the same thing with the word shevit (captivity). We thus read, Thou hast turned the captivity of Jacob (shevit Yaakov) (Ps. 85:2), and And his daughters into captivity (ba-shevit) (Num. 21:29). Others say that a brit (covenant) is a cut boundary. 69 A brit is an agreement with conditions (boundaries) which cannot be violated. Brit has the letters bet, resh, tav. These letters can be rearranged bet, tav, resh, meaning to cut (see Gen. 15:10) (Weiser). Others say it comes from bara (to cut), the tav taking the place of the ale f (Cherez). According to this opinion brit comes from the word cut and not from choose.

Verse 19

[TWO OF EVERY SORT.] After stating two, Scripture goes on to explain that this refers to male and female. 70 Two of every sort can be taken to mean any two of every sort, two males or two females. After stating generally, And of every living thing of all flesh, the Bible then explains that this refers to Of the fowl after their kind, and of the cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind (v. 20). This

includes 71 A general statement followed by particulars is qualified by the particulars. Thus fish cannot be included in And of every living thing of all flesh because the particulars include only land animals. all animals of the field and all large and small animals that are born via sexual intercourse. It excludes living things not born 72 Medieval man believed that certain animals are born through spontaneous generation; i.e., they do not couple. Noah did not have to bring these types of animals to the ark because the verse tells us that that he was to bring male and female, that is, animals that couple. by coupling, and marine animals. Fish are excluded although they are considered "flesh." 73 Since fish are considered "flesh" the command And of every living thing of all flesh would apply to them. However, since the Bible goes on to say, of every creeping thing of the ground, fish are excluded. Proof of this can be seen in the words of Moses: and yet Thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. If flocks and herds be slain for them…or if all the fish of the sea be gathered for them, will they suffice them (Num. 11:21,22).
[SHALT THOU BRING INTO THE ARK.] This is a command to Noah not to desert these creatures but to bring them into the ark with him in order to preserve the seed of each species.

Verse 20

[SHALL COME UNTO THEE.] They will come by themselves. Noah therefore did not have to search for them on islands; neither did he have to hunt for all sorts of fowl. God commanded Noah to prepare food for all the animals in the ark. Foolish ones ask, what did birds of prey eat? What did carnivorous animals such as lions who live on meat eat? Their questions are invalid. One who cannot find meat will eat grass or fruit when hungry. The saying found in Rabbinic literature that there exists a large animal that consumes the grazing of one thousand mountains daily is a good story. 74 Cf. Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer, Chap. 11. The problem is, where did Noah get food for this beast? I.E. answers that the statement concerning this beast is not to be taken literally. Similarly the tradition concerning a bird that blocks out the sun with its wings has a secret meaning to it and is not to be taken literally. 75 Va-yikra Rabbah, Chap. 22. God commanded Noah to make the ark many years before the flood. When the flood approached, God the glorious commanded Noah and his family to go to the ark. God the glorious commanded Noah to take seven males and seven females from every clean animal and fowl because they were needed for sacrifices.

Chapter 7

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

FOR YET SEVEN DAYS. On the seventh day the rain will fall without letup for forty days. The Lord told this to Noah on the tenth day of the second month. 1 The flood began on the 17th of the second month. Therefore God's command (to go into the ark) was given to Noah on the 10th, seven days prior to the fall of the rain. At the end of the forty days from the start of the flood the sun returned to its proper place vis-a-vis the moon. 2 And the flood ceased. I.E., who believed in astrology, held that the flood came about as a result of an impropitious conjunction of the sun and moon (Weiser). The latter is a secret. 3 The uninitiated might suspect that I.E. denies divine providence by giving an astrological explanation to the flood (Krinsky).
[LIVING SUBSTANCE.] The word yekum (living substance) is found in the Bible only in our chapter. 4 In our verse and in verse 23. Filwarg points out that it is found in Deut. 11:6. Weiser suggests that I.E. means, it is not found having the same meaning as here. Krinsky claims that I.E. simply erred. It is a peh, yod and follows the paradigm of the word keruv (cherub). 5 Its root is yod, kof, mem, and like the word keruv it is vocalized with a sheva beneath the first letter and a shuruk following the second letter. Others say that yekum is an inverted ayin, vav. 6 Its root is kof, vav, mem. The vav becomes a yod and the yod is placed before the kof. Thus kof, vav, mem equals yod, kof, mem. Hence the ayin vav becomes a peh yod (Weiser). It is like the word yerivai in Strive (riv) O Lord, with them that strive with me (yerivai) (Ps. 35:1). 7 The root of strive is resh, vav, bet. The root of yervai appears to be yod, resh, bet. However, it is resh, vav, bet transformed into a peh yod. Living substance is a general term for every living thing that is upon the face of the earth.

Verse 5

AND NOAH DID. As he was commanded. He and his family came to the vicinity of the ark.

Verse 6

Verse 7

BECAUSE OF THE WATERS OF THE FLOOD. Because of fear of the waters of the flood. In these seven days many of the clean animals and fowl came of their own volition to the vicinity of the ark. From the others and from everything that creeps, a pair consisting of a male and female of each kind came to the ark.

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

WERE ALL THE FOUNTAINS OF THE GREAT DEEP BROKEN UP. Mayenot (fountains of) is in the construct. In When there were no fountains (mayanot) (Prov. 8:24), mayanot is in the absolute. 8 Mayenot in our verse has a sheva beneath the yod. Mayanot in Prov. 8:24 has a kamatz beneath the yod. DEEP. The word tehom (deep) may be either masculine or feminine. 9 Tehom in our verse is in the feminine (tehom rabbah). Elsewhere (Habakkuk 3:10) natan tehom kolo is in the masculine, hence I.E.'s comment. Similarly tehom in The deep (tehom) made it grow (Ezek. 31:4), is in the feminine. The Bible does not mention the streams because their waters come from the fountains. When the fountains of the deep broke up, their waters gushed upward and the windows of the heavenly storehouse of water were opened and their contents poured down upon the earth. The earth was confounded; there was no way of telling day from night. Proof of the latter is God's promise to Noah after the flood that and day and night shall not cease (Gen. 8:22). When the rain ceased falling from the heavens, Noah knew that forty days and forty nights had passed, for God revealed to him this secret. 10 How long it would rain (verse 4). AND THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN. The word arubbot (windows) has the same meaning as arubbot (window) in Behold, if the Lord should make windows (arubbot) in heaven (II Kings 7:2). The term window or storehouse (Deut. 28:12) when referring to heaven is in keeping with human language and practice. 11 See above. Gen. 1:26. Some say that the alef of arubbot (windows) is a root letter 12 The root being alef, resh, bet. and that arubbot is similar to kevudot (riches). 13 Cf. Ps. 45:14. That is, it follows a paradigm where the first root letter is vocalized with a sheva, in our case a chataf pattach because of the alef, and the second with a shuruk or a kubbutz. Others say that the alef of arubbot is not a root letter. It is similar to the alef in agorat (piece of) (I Sam. 2:36). 14 Agorat (a piece) comes from the root gimel, resh, resh. The alef is added to the root. Similarly arubbot (windows) comes from the root resh, bet, bet. Both arubbot and agorat come from roots whose last two letters are the same. 15 See note 14. On the seventeenth day of the second month, the day the flood started, Noah and his family entered the ark. At that time Noah brought into the ark the animals, cattle and the creeping things and fowl. Bird is a general term for a winged creature. 16 The Hebrew reads, all birds (kol tzippor), all wings (kol kanaf). I.E. notes that kol kanaf explains kol tzippor ; i.e., a tzippor is a being with a kanaf (Weiser). The great miracle was that they all came two by two of their own volition.

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

AND THEY THAT WENT IN, WENT IN MALE AND FEMALE. The meaning of And they that went in is: and they that went into the ark.

[AND THE LORD SHUT HIM IN.] The term shut him in in our verse has a positive connotation. It has to be so interpreted because being shut in at that time was preferable to not being shut in. However, elsewhere it has a negative implication. Thus we read, He shutteth up a man (Job 12:14), and And whom God hath hedged in (Job 3:23). That it has a negative connotation is obvious from the first half of the verse. 17 Job 3:23 opens with To a man whose way is hid ; similarly Job 12:14 opens with Behold, He breaketh down. Noah closed the door of the ark and God helped him in that no part of the ark cracked open, for had any part opened, then all would have immediately died. Why state, and the flood was forty days upon the earth (v. 17), after having said, And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights (v. 12)? The way to read the verse (v. 17) is as follows: After the flood was forty days upon the earth, the waters increased and bore up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth. 18 Verse 17 does not intend to teach us that there was a flood upon the earth; verse 12 does that. Verse 17 teaches that after 40 days of flood…the ark was lifted up above the earth. This verse shows that for the first forty days the ark did not move.

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

EXCEEDINGLY. The word me’od (exceedingly) is repeated in the text in order to stress that the waters prevailed to their maximum potential. Why state, and the mountains were covered (v. 20), after having said, and all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered (v. 19)? Its meaning is: All the high mountains were covered with water (v. 19), and these mountains were covered by fifteen cubits of water (v. 20). 19 Verse 20 should be understood as follows: 15 cubits did the waters prevail, so that the mountains (mentioned in v. 19) were covered (by 15 cubits of water). There are those who maintain that there is a very tall mountain in Greece that the waters did not cover. 20 Krinsky. However, we believe the words of our God and we put aside the foolish nonsense of man.

Verse 20

Verse 21

[AND ALL FLESH PERISHED.] The meaning of And all flesh perished is: and all flesh had perished. 21 Perished is a pluperfect. All flesh obviously perished before the mountains were covered by 15 cubits of water. There are many such instances in Scripture, such as And I besought the Lord (Deut. 3:23), and the true meaning of And He caused manna to rain upon them for food (Ps. 78:24). 22 Although va-yamter (and he caused to rain) does not appear to be a pluperfect, it is, (and he had caused to rain). Similarly va-etchannan is to be read: and I had besought it. [PERISHED.] Va-yigva (perished) means died. I will explain the exact meaning of this term when I comment on And Abraham expired (va-yigva), and died (Gen. 25:8). It is clear 23 From verse 21. I.E.’s point is that ha-romes is a general term. The verse then goes on to enumerate exactly

what ha-romes includes. that remes (creeping thing) is a general term that includes fowl, cattle, animals, small thin swarming things and man. It is possible that all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life (v. 22) refers to every man (v. 21), 24 Verse 22 thus explains only every man, i.e., those who had a neshamat ru'ach chayyim. According to Cherez, this interpretation postulates that remes does not include man. as we do not find the expression neshamah (breath) 25 Neshamah is the term for soul. used in reference to any creature except man. Many say that the soul is termed neshamah because it comes from the heaven (shamayim). The fact that shamayim and neshamah have differing roots does not refute the latter interpretation because there are other similar instances. 26 Neshamah comes from the root nun, shin, mem. Shamayim comes from the root shin, mem, mem (Weiser).

Verse 22

Verse 23

AND THEY WERE BLOTTED OUT. Their names were erased from the earth because they left no descendants. [AND NOAH ONLY WAS LEFT.] Only Noah and those with him were left. This verse proves how wrong are some of our ignorant brethren who maintain that the flood did not cover the entire earth. 27 Some say this alludes to those who maintain that a certain high mountain in Greece was not covered by the flood; others, to the Rabbinic sages who said that the land of Israel was not covered by the flood. See Zebahim 113b; Bereshit Rabbah 33:9. However, Weiser doubts that I.E. would express himself so strongly against the Rabbinic sages. Others say that I.E. directed his barb against those who take the Rabbinic statement literally.

Verse 24

AND THE WATERS PREVAILED UPON THE EARTH A HUNDRED AND FIFTY DAYS. This was so because the fountains were broken up (v. 11) and it rained for a day and stopped for a day for, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights (v. 4) means it will rain for a period of forty days and forty nights without letup. That it did in fact also rain after the first forty days were over is evident from and the rain from heaven was restrained (Gen. 8:2). 28 The rain was now fully restrained, which implies that prior to this it was only partially restrained.

Chapter 8

Verse 1

AND GOD REMEMBERED NOAH. This includes his children and the women. Noah alone is mentioned because he was the most important of them.
AND EVERY LIVING THING. A general term for beasts of the field, fowl that fly, and for everything that swarms upon the earth. And God remembered means God remembered the oath that he had sworn to Noah. 1 See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 6:18.
AND GOD MADE A WIND TO PASS OVER THE EARTH. The wind blew continuously. 2 Until the earth dried. Cf. Weiser.
AND THE WATERS ASSUAGED. They rested and no longer prevailed. Then was the king's wrath assuaged (Esther 7:10) is similar. Assuaged in our verse and in Esther is in the kal. However, in our verse the caf receives a

dagesh to make up for the missing middle root letter. 3 Its root is shin, caf, caf. One caf is missing in va-yashokku (assuaged) in our verse, unlike in the Book of Esther, where all three radicals are present in assuaged (shakhakhah).

Verse 2

WERE STOPPED. Va-yissakheru (were stopped) is synonymous with va-yissageru (were closed). Although both of these words mean the same, they come from different roots. 4 Va-yissakheru comes from the root samekh, caf, resh ; va-yissageru comes from the root samekh, gimel, resh. They do not come from one root with the caf and gimel interchanging, for these two letters do not interchange. The only letters that interchange are the yod, heh, vav and alef, and the sin and shin.
AND THE RAIN FROM HEAVEN WAS RESTRAINED. It was restrained in the storehouse of rain. 5 See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 7:11.

Verse 3

AND THE WATERS RETURNED. The waters returned at the end of one hundred and fifty days to their reservoirs beneath the earth where they are normally stored. Noah knew that it took one hundred and fifty days for this to happen, for he was a prophet. 6 There was no way of telling day from night during the flood. Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 7:11. They err who maintain that since Scripture speaks of one hundred and fifty days making up five months, 7 The 150 days commenced on the 17th of the second month (when the flood started) and lasted till the 17th of the seventh month, a period of five months. it must be referring to solar months, for five solar months come to one hundred and fifty-two days. 8 Solar months alternate between 30 and 31 days. In a five-month period there must be at least two months of 31 days. Also anyone who maintains that Noah followed a calendar of intercalated 9 That is, lunar months alternating between months of 29 and 30 days. (Cheshvan and Kislev can each have 29 or 30 days. See note 36.) lunar months, with Cheshvan being the second month 10 This is the opinion of this commentator. I.E. maintains that Iyyar was the second month. Cf. verse 5. and the year full, misses the mark. 11 Even if Cheshvan and Kislev had 30 days each, the year being full (shelemah), the number of days in the five lunar months comes to 148. The flood started on the 17th of Cheshvan, the five months end on the 17th of Nisan. They include 13 days in Cheshvan, 30 days in Kislev, 29 days in Tevet, 30 in Shevat, 29 in Adar and 17 in Nisan: a total of 148 days (Krinsky). Why go to all this trouble? Even if the Bible explicitly stated that Noah employed solar months or that he counted the months from Tishri 12 Making Chesvan the second month as the previously quoted second opinion held. this would have no effect on Jewish law, for the laws governing the establishment of the seasons were not given by Noah. 13 But by Moses. He established the Jewish calendar and taught the Jews to use a lunar calendar and count the months from Nisan. It is also possible to say many things concerning the ark's coming to rest. 14 Contra Rashi, verse 4 (Krinsky). Rashi calculates by exactly how much the waters receded each day until the ark finally rested on terra firma. For other interpretations see Weiser, Cherez and Netter. However, such speculations "cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain" (I Sam. 12:21).

Verse 4

Verse 5

IN THE TENTH MONTH, ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE MONTH, WERE THE TOPS OF THE MOUNTAINS SEEN. Noah established the first day of the month even though he did not see the new moon, for he had not as yet opened the window of the ark. 15 Hence he could not see the new moon. Kimchi suggests that Noah had instruments by which he determined the date. Noah sent out the raven on the tenth day of Shevat. From that day on the raven continuously went to and fro until Noah left the ark, for Scripture states that it went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. On the day that the earth dried, Noah and all that were with him left the ark. Seven days after sending the raven, Noah sent the dove. The latter event took place on the seventeenth day of Shevat, which was the tenth month from the start of the flood. Noah observed the quarterly watch. 16 The month is divided into quarters (watches). At the end of each watch, that day signifies a change in nature and fate (Weiser). Hence Noah waited seven days (a watch) between the raven and the dove; similarly with the dove itself. And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove (v. 10) is proof of the above. 17 That Noah waited seven days before sending the dove the first time (Krinsky).

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

[AND HE STAYED.] Va-yachel (and he stayed) is, I believe, derived from the word techillah (beginning). 18 From the root chet, lamed, lamed. Cf. Targum Yerushalmi, And he began to count. For if it came from the same root as tochelet (hope), 19 From the root yod, chet, lamed. This root connotes waiting with hope, as in la-meyachalim le-chasdo (toward them that wait for His mercy) (Ps. 33:18). it should have been vocalized va-yichel, as is the case with va-yiketz 20 Gen. 9:24. (and he awoke), or vocalized va-yechel, as in the case of va-yeshev (and he dwelt). 21 The point is, if va-yachel is a peh yod then it would be vocalized like a word of this classification, i.e., like va-yiketz or va-yeshev, both of which are peh yods. The vocalization va-yachel shows that it belongs to the kefulim, those roots whose second and third radicals are identical. However, it is possible it is an irregular verb. 22 It comes from the root yod, chet, lamed, meaning to stay, wait with hope, but is vocalized as if it came from the root chet, lamed, lamed (Krinsky).
AND AGAIN HE SENT FORTH THE DOVE OUT OF THE ARK. On the twenty-fourth day of Shevat.

Verse 11

IN HER MOUTH AN OLIVE-LEAF FRESHLY PLUCKED. Some say that Scripture employs two words with one meaning, 23 Aleh (leaf) and taraf (freshly plucked) mean the same. The verse thus reads, an olive-leaf, a frond in

its mouth. Similarly in Daniel adamah (earth) and afar (dust) mean the same and the Bible could have employed only one word. as it does in the dust of the earth (Dan. 12:2). They interpret taraf (freshly plucked) as leaf. All its sprouting leaves (tarpe tzimchah) (Ezek. 17:9) is similar. That taraf is a noun is evident from the long kamatz beneath the resh. It is like zahav (gold) and ashan (smoke). However, in my opinion the bet of be-fihah (mouth) is superfluous. 24 I.E. says that the phrase should read taraf-pihah (its mouth had plucked). He thus insists that the bet is superfluous. According to this interpretation taraf is a verb. It is like the bet of be-rucho (by his breath) in By His breath the heavens are serene (Job 26:13) 25 The bet (by) is superfluous. and the bet of ve-echad (at one with Himself) (Job 23:13). 26 This should be read echad. In this case taraf is a verb meaning plucked and is vocalized with a kamatz beneath the second radical like taraf (torn) in For He hath torn (taraf) (Hos. 6:1) 27 Taraf (torn) has a kamatz beneath the second radical. A third person kal perfect usually has a pattach beneath the second radical. Hence I.E. points out that there are instances where it has a kamatz beneath the second radical. and sha'ag (hath roared) in The lion hath roared (sha'ag) (Amos 3:8) 28 Sha'ag has a kamatz under the second radical. and other similar cases. It is also possible that taraf (freshly plucked) is vocalized with a kamatz because it is an adjective like chacham (wise). It means the same as taruf (torn), for an adjective may resemble an active or passive participle. 29 Taraf resembles the active, taruf the passive (Krinsky). According to this interpretation taraf is an adjective meaning plucked.

Verse 12

AND HE STAYED. Va-yiyyachel (and he stayed) is a nifal and is penultimately accented 30 Because of the vav conversive (Weiser). like va-yillachem (and he fought) (Num. 21:1) and va-yitzamed (and he was joined) (Num. 25:3). 31 Both are nifal forms and are penultimately accented because of the vav conversive. However, there are instances when corresponding nifals are accented on the last syllable, 32 That is, nifals with the vav conversive. as in va-yippaked (was empty) in that David's place was empty (I Sam. 20:27). The entire root appears in And he stayed, 33 There are two yods in va-yiyyachel (and he stayed); one is the first letter of the root yod, chet, lamed, the other is the sign of the third person future. In such cases the root yod usually changes into a vav, hence I.E.'s comment (Cherez). as it does in shot through (yiyyareh) (Ex. 19:13). 34 Yiyyareh from the root yod, resh, heh.
[AND SENT FORTH THE DOVE.] Noah sent out the dove on the first day of Adar. This time it no longer returned to him as it was wont to.
ANY MORE. Od (anymore) means forever. Od in his uncleanness is yet (od) upon him (Num. 19:13) and While the earth remaineth (od kol yeme ha-aretz) (Gen. 8:22) is similar.

Verse 13

THE WATERS WERE DRIED UP FROM OFF THE EARTH. Only the surface of the earth dried; the soil itself was swampy and hence not yet firm enough to walk upon. The earth did not fully dry until later. Those who insist that Noah used a lunar calendar because Scripture tells us that he spent a year and ten days in the ark and the ten days refer to the excess of the solar year over a lunar year are pressing a point. 35 A lunar year plus 10 days equals a solar year. Cf. Bereshit Rabbah, Chap. 33:7, and Rashi's commentary, which states that the flood and its aftermath lasted a solar year. Noah entered the ark on the 17th day of the second month and left it on the 27th day of the second month of the following year. First of all, for this to be so the year had to be "full." 36 A solar year has 365

days; a lunar year may have 353, 354 or 355 days, called, respectively, shanah chasera (defective year), shanah ki-sidra (regular year), and shenah shelemah (a full year). In the first instance Cheshvan and Kislev have 29 days each; in the second Cheshvan has 29 days and Kislev 30; in the third both Cheshvan and Kislev have 30 days each. To make the lunar year equal the solar year, the lunar year had to be "full" plus 10 days. Furthermore, there is no reason to assume that Noah spent a year in the ark. 37 Why say that the year and 10 days that Noah spent in the ark was the equivalent of a solar year and Noah employed a lunar calendar, when it could just as well have been a solar year plus 10 days? He could equally have been in it for a solar year plus ten days. 38 The point is that we do not know what sort of calendar Noah used. Elsewhere I.E. comments that Noah could have employed Egyptian or Persian calendars. As to Jewish law, the calendar to be followed is the one legislated by Moses.

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

BRING FORTH. Haytze (bring forth) is written as if it came from a root whose radicals remain unchanged in conjugation. 39 In reality it is a peh yod, and in hifil the yod should change to a vav (Filwarg). Hayshar (make straight) in Make Thy way straight before my face (Ps. 5:9) is similar. THAT THEY MAY SWARM. Reproduce.

Verse 18

Verse 19

AFTER THEIR FAMILIES. After their kind. Some say that the animals bred in the ark. 40 In contradistinction to the rabbis who said that the animals did not engage in intercourse in the ark. Therefore they had "families," each of which left the ark by itself. According to the first interpretation they did not breed in the ark. Hence they had no "families." Thus they interpret "families" as kinds. Each family then left the ark by itself and did not intermingle with any other. This interpretation is not farfetched.

Verse 20

EVERY CLEAN BEAST. There are ten kinds of clean beasts. 41 The 10 are mentioned in Deut. 14:4,5. We do not know the number of clean fowl because the Bible lists only the unclean ones since the clean fowl are more numerous than the unclean. Noah built the altar on one of the mountains of Ararat. 42 He brought an offering of each of the clean animals and fowl before they dispersed (Weiser).

Verse 21

SMELLED. Va-yarach (smelled) follows the paradigm of va-yanach (rested) in and rested (va-yanach) in all the borders of Egypt (Ex. 10:14). The resh is vocalized with a pattach because the chet which follows it is a guttural. This is in keeping with the rules of Hebrew grammar. Heaven forbid that one conclude from our verse that God smells. Neither does He eat, as Who did eat the fat of their sacrifices (Deut. 32:38) 43 The verse is not to be taken literally, for the Torah employed human language (Kaputa). states. The meaning of our verse is that God accepted the burnt offering and it pleased Him. It may be compared to a human being who smells a pleasant scent and enjoys it.
THE SWEET SAVOUR. Nicho'ach (sweet savour) comes from the same root as menuchah (rest). 44 From the root nun, vav, chet. The chet is doubled in nicho'ach as the final peh of the root of ve-na'afufe'ah (and her adulteries) is doubled (Hos. 2:4). Its meaning is that the sweet odor assuaged God's anger, or that it caused a power from on high to rest on man. 45 Compare, to cause a blessing to rest (le-hani'ach) on thy house (Ezek. 44:30).
IN HIS HEART. El libbo means in His heart. 46 The Hebrew literally reads, to his heart, hence I.E.'s comment. He then revealed His secret to Noah who was a prophet.
[I WILL NOT AGAIN CURSE THE GROUND.] As I did on account of Adam, as it is written, cursed is the ground for thy sake (Gen. 3:17).
THE IMAGINATION. Yetzer (the imagination) refers to the nature that man was created with.
NEITHER WILL I AGAIN SMITE. Via a flood.
[AGAIN.] Od means forever, 47 See I.E.'s comment on verse 12. or again. And wept on his neck a good while (od) (Gen. 46:29) is similar. 48 Which should be rendered, according to I.E., "And wept on his neck a second time."

Verse 22

WHILE THE EARTH REMAINETH. This indicates that an end has been fixed for the earth. The Rabbinic interpretation of It shall be eighteen thousand reeds round about (Ezek. 48:38) is very precious. However, even one in a thousand does not know what it means. 49 According to the sage Rava, it shall be eighteen thousand reeds round about indicates that the world will come to an end after 18,000 generations. Cf. Sanhedrin 97b; Sukkah 45b.
SEED TIME AND HARVEST. The year is divided into two periods 50 From an agricultural point of view, they are planting time and harvest time. and then into four: cold, the antithesis of heat, and summer, the antithesis of winter, corresponding to the four seasons of the year. 51 The Bible does not list the four seasons in order because it wants to stress their antithetical nature (Cherez). The four periods are all divided into day and night, for when the days are short the nights are long, and as the nights get shorter the days get longer until both are equal. 52 Hence the natural cycles do not cease.

Chapter 9

Verse 1

Verse 2

AND THE DREAD OF YOU. The root of ve-chittechem (and the dread of you) is chet, tav, tav. It comes from the same root as chatat (terror) in Ye, see a terror (chatat) (Job 6:21). Chittechem is synonymous with chatattekhem. 1 Chatat (terror or dread) with the pronominal suffix would read chatattekhem (your dread). In chittekhem a tav is missing; in chatattechem the whole root is present.
AND UPON ALL WHEREWITH THE GROUND TEEMETH. It means everything which creeps upon the ground. 2 Interpreting tirmos ha'adamah as tirmos al ha'adamah. Or, ha'adamah (the ground) is the subject. 3 According to this interpretation be-khol asher tirmos ha'adamah means, upon all creeping things which the ground will bring forth (Weiser). In the former, ground (adamah) is the object, in the latter the subject. According to the second interpretation, tirmos means will give birth to creeping things.
INTO YOUR HAND ARE THEY DELIVERED. This is to be read as if written, "because" into your hand are they delivered.
[AND UPON ALL.] Some say that the bet of be-khol (and upon all) and of u-ve-khol (and upon all) are in place of a vav. 4 That is, be-khol, and u-ve-khol should be read as if written ve-khol (and all). According to this interpretation the second half of our verse is an independent clause stating: and all wherewith the ground teemeth and all the fish of the sea; into your hand are delivered. According to this interpretation we do not have to add the word "because" before into your hand are they delivered. However, it should be noted that this comment is difficult. U-ve-khol has a vav. Weiser suggests interpreting I.E.: and the bet of u-ve-khol is superfluous. Cf. Weiser and Cherez. However, it is more likely that this clause is connected to And the fear of you. 5 According to this interpretation the bet has the meaning of on; be-khol thus means upon all rather than and all as in the former interpretation. The same is true for u-ve-khol (Weiser). According to this explanation the second half of the verse is a continuation of the first half. The entire verse should be read as follows: And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth… and upon all (be-khol) wherewith the ground teemeth, and upon all (u-ve-khol) the fish of the sea; because into your hand are they delivered. According to this interpretation "because" has to be added to the text (Cherez).

Verse 3

EVERY MOVING THING. Remes (moving thing) is a general term for wild and domesticated animals and for all fowl and fish. Man was now permitted to kill and eat them all.
AS THE GREEN HERB. Yerek (green) can be vocalized in two ways. 6 It is vocalized either with two segolim (yerek) or two kematzim. The point is that green and smoke can follow either of two paradigms, pe'el (two segolim) or pa'al (two kematzim). The same is true with smoke. We thus find, behold a smoking (ashan) 7 Vocalized with two kematzim (ashan). furnace (Gen. 15:17), and as the smoke (ke-eshen) 8 Vocalized with two segolim (eshen). of a furnace (Ex. 19:18).

Verse 4

ONLY FLESH WITH THE LIFE THEREOF, WHICH IS THE BLOOD THEREOF, SHALL YE NOT EAT. The meaning of this verse is that you shall not eat flesh with its life (nefesh), which is its blood, as in and thou shalt not eat the life (nefesh, i.e., the blood) with the flesh (Deut. 12:23), and For as to the life (nefesh) of all flesh, the blood thereof is all one with the life (nefesh) thereof (Lev. 17:14). The nefesh (life) which moves and feels is the body. 9 The word nefesh does not here refer to soul; it means body. However, by extension it also refers to the blood which gives

life to the body. Krinsky has an alternate reading: the nefesh spoken of here refers to that which moves and feels within the body, i.e., the blood. According to Cherez, I.E. uses the term body for the blood.

Verse 5

AND SURELY YOUR BLOOD OF YOUR LIVES WILL I REQUIRE. I have permitted you to shed the blood of all living creatures. However, I have prohibited you the spilling of the blood of your lives because you are human. On the contrary, I will avenge that blood (edreshennu), as in For He that avengeth (doresh) blood (Ps. 9:13). Scripture first lays down a general rule, And surely your blood of your lives will I require, and then goes into detail and tells us whom God will punish for taking human life. AND AT THE HAND OF MAN. If many people kill one person or if one man kills another person (even at the hand of every man's brother), I will avenge that death. I will also punish a beast that kills a man by having another animal kill it. 10 This explains, at the hand of every beast will I require it. Thus man is permitted to kill animals but animals are prohibited from killing humans. In my opinion it is farfetched to maintain that and surely your blood of your lives refers to suicide. 11 Cf. Baba Kama 91b. This verse teaches that a person is prohibited from harming himself. See also Rabbi B. Epstein, Torah Temimah on this verse.

Verse 6

[WHOSO SHEDDETH MAN'S BLOOD, BY MAN SHALL HIS BLOOD BE SHED.] This is a further elaboration. 12 On at the hand of man, even at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man. God will see to it that the murderers will somehow be killed by another person (Filwarg). It may also be taken, and this appears most likely, as a command to the sons of Noah to execute murderers. The term ba-adam (by man) can be interpreted in one of three ways: in front of witnesses; 13 The bet meaning in front of; ba-adam, in front of people, i.e. witnesses or in public. The verse thus reads, Whoso sheddeth man's blood before witnesses (or before many people), his blood shall be shed. in front of people; or because a man was killed. There are many other such instances. 14 Taking the bet to mean because (Krinsky). The verse thus reads, Whoso sheddeth man's blood, because he killed a man, his blood shall be shed.

Verse 7

Verse 8

AND GOD SPOKE UNTO NOAH, AND TO HIS SONS. God spoke to Noah's sons through Noah. It is also possible that they were all prophets and God addressed all four of them.

Verse 9

AND WITH YOUR SEED. Ve-et zarakhem is to be rendered: and with your seed. 15 In other words, et here has the meaning of im (with). The third with you (v. 10) is to be interpreted as meaning: that were with you. 16 Ittekhem (with your) appears three times in verses 9 and 10. The third with you, i.e., and every beast of the earth with you, appears redundant because it follows and with every living creature that is with you, the fowl, the cattle. Hence I.E. interprets the former to mean that were with you in the Ark. It is also possible that with you is repeated for additional explanation. 17 The Bible repeats itself in order to further

explain itself; i.e., the beasts spoken of are those that are with you. The covenant spoken of is that all flesh not be cut off anymore by the waters of the flood (v. 11). 18 Verse 11 reads, And I will establish My covenant with you; neither shall, etc. Hence it appears that a covenant was made and then God promised neither shall, etc. I.E. points out that neither shall opens the covenant (Krinsky).

Verse 10

Verse 11

[NEITHER SHALL ALL FLESH BE CUT OFF.] Flesh refers to the body. The body is so designated because flesh senses and the bones do not. The covenant is a promise that all bodies will never again be destroyed by a flood. God included in His covenant a pledge not to bring a comparable deluge ever again because the first part of His promise, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood, may be taken to imply that there will be other floods but that God will save humanity. It is concerning this covenant that the prophet says, For as I have sworn that the waters of Noah Should no more go over the earth (Is. 54:9).

Verse 12

THE TOKEN. Ot (token) may be either masculine or feminine. 19 Here it is feminine. In Ex. 3:12 it is masculine.

Verse 13

MY BOW. Behold, I now set a bow in the clouds. Saadiah Gaon's interpretation that the rainbow was previously in existence is incorrect. 20 The past tense natati (I have set) is employed, hence Saadiah's interpretation.

Verse 14

WHEN I BRING CLOUDS OVER THE EARTH. The nun of be-aneni (when I bring clouds) does not have a dagesh even though it is a pi'el and therefore should have a dagesh in the middle radical of the root, as in when I speak (be-dabberi) with thee (Ex. 19:9). 21 The bet of dabberi has a dagesh. I.E. reads, be-dabberi ittakh. However, Ex. 19:9 reads, be-dabberi immakh. According to Vat. Ebr. 38 the reference is to Ezek. 3:27. However, here, too, the quote is not exact. If not a scribal error, it shows that I.E. quoted verses from memory.
AND THE BOW IS SEEN IN THE CLOUDS. If we would believe what the Greek scholars tell us, that the rainbow is produced by the sun's flames, then we must assume that after the flood God strengthened the sun's light. 22 According to I.E. the rainbow was created after the flood. Hence he believes that God now strengthened the sun's power so that its rays would produce a rainbow. This is the way that a person who understands the sciences will interpret this verse.

Verse 15

[AND THE WATERS SHALL NO MORE BECOME.] The use of the singular yiheyeh (shall become) with mayim (waters) does not prove that mayim is singular. 23 See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 1:14. We find the same word used with a plural in But there were (va-yehi) 24 Va-yehi is singular. certain men (Num. 9:6).

Verse 16

[AND THE BOW SHALL BE IN THE CLOUD.] The bow is always hidden in the cloud and there seen by God. 25 Even when man does not see the bow, God sees it and remembers his covenant. When man does not see the bow it is hidden in the clouds.

Verse 17

AND GOD SAID UNTO NOAH. This is the covenant that I disclosed to you and this is the oath which I have established. 26 According to I.E. which I have established does not refer to sign because a sign is not established. It is made. Hence he interprets established as referring to an oath not to bring a flood (Meijler).

Verse 18

AND HAM IS THE FATHER OF CANAAN. This teaches that both Ham and Canaan were wicked, and as the father does, so do the children. Canaan and not Cush 27 Cush was Ham's first-born (Gen. 10:6). Thus he, rather than Canaan, the youngest, should have been mentioned in this verse. is mentioned in this verse because Canaan was going to be cursed. This chapter 28 Telling of what Canaan did, and that Noah cursed him. was written to inform us that all Canaanites, both male and female, bear a curse from the time of Noah. Abraham thus commanded his servant, thou shalt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites (Gen. 24:3). Rebecca similarly said, If Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth…what good shall my life do me (Gen. 27:46). Should someone ask, what sins were the Hittites guilty of, let him open his eyes; the Hittites and the Amorites and the others are all descendants of Canaan. 29 Cf. Gen. 10:15,16. We therefore read, unto the land of Canaan (Josh. 22:32). 30 It was inhabited by the Hittites, Amorites and other nations. It was known as the land of Canaan because they were all decended from Canaan.

Verse 19

Verse 20

AND NOAH…BEGAN. Va-yachel (began) is derived from techillah (beginning). It belongs to those roots whose second and third letters are identical. 31 Its root is chet, lamed, lamed. It is a hifil, similar to va-yasekh (shut up) in Or who shut up 32 Its root is samekh, caf, caf, and it is also in the hifil. (va-yasekh) the sea with doors (Job 38:8).
THE HUSBANDMAN. A skilled agriculturalist, agriculture being a great science. The Rabbinic statement that Noah drank from his vineyard on the day he planted it is not to be taken literally. 33 Bereshit Rabbah 36:7. There is a secret meaning to it. Similarly and the woman conceived, and bore a son (Ex. 2:2) did not take place on one and the same day. 34 The women obviously did not conceive and bear on the same day. Similarly and he planted a vineyard And he drank did not take place on the same day.

Verse 21

AND HE WAS UNCOVERED. Va-yitgal (and he was uncovered) comes from the root gimel, lamed, heh, meaning to uncover. It is a hitpa'el. Yital (lift himself up) in And let him lift himself up (yital) (Jer. 51:3) 35 It,

too, is a hitpa'el and a lamed heh. Its root is ayin, lamed, heh. is similar.
[HIS TENT.] The heh of oholoh (his tent) is in place of a vav. 36 The masculine pronominal suffix is usually a vav. The heh of be-re'oh (as they shouted), in the noise of the people as they shouted (be-re'oh) (Ex. 32:17), and the heh of fera'oh (let them loose) in for Aaron had let them loose (fera'oh) (Ex. 32:25), are similar.

Verse 22

Verse 23

UPON BOTH THEIR SHOULDERS. Each one placed an edge of the blanket on his shoulders. Shekhem (shoulders) does not come in the plural. 37 The word for shoulder is shekhem. The plural in the construct would be shikhme. The Bible employs the singular (shekhem) because the word does not appear in the plural.
BACKWARD. Opposite of the normal way of walking, which is to go forward.

Verse 24

AND NOAH AWOKE. Scripture does not reveal what was done to Noah. Be that as it may, Canaan was the culprit. The sequence of events was as follows: Ham saw his father's nakedness and unlike his brothers did not cover him. On the contrary, he revealed what he saw. Canaan heard that Noah was lying naked in his tent and did something to Noah. However, the Bible does not tell us what he did to him. 38 The sages of the Talmud are divided as to what was done to Noah. Some say that he was castrated. Others say that he was sodomized. Cf. San. 70a.
The meaning of the verse and (Noah) knew what his youngest son had done unto him is proof 39 Ham was not Noah's youngest son; therefore his youngest son cannot refer to him. Canaan was a youngest son and the verse can thus apply to him. that Canaan was the culprit, for we read, And the sons of Ham: Cush, and Mizraim, and Put, and Canaan (Gen. 10:6). 40 We thus see that Canaan was Ham's youngest son. Furthermore, the his in his youngest son refers to Ham, who is previously mentioned. 41 The verse should be understood as follows: And Noah knew what Ham's youngest son had done to him. That is why Noah cursed Canaan. The one who says that Ham was the culprit, and that Canaan was cursed because Noah did not want to curse his son (Ham) because God had blessed Noah's sons, is indulging in Midrash. 42 Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 31:11.

Verse 25

A SERVANT OF SERVANTS. Eved avadim (a servant of servants) means a servant like all other servants. 43 Thus eved avadim means a member of the servant class. If Scripture meant a servant to servants then it would have read eved ha-avadim. Proof of this is: it is most holy (kodesh kodashim) (Lev. 6:18), and In a most holy place (be-kodesh ha-kodashim) (Num. 18:10). 44 See I.E.'s comment to Lev. 6:18 where I.E. points out that kodesh kodashim means holy (kodesh) as one of the holy objects (kodashim). When Scripture wants to say most holy it uses the term kodesh ha-kodashim. Similarly had Scripture read eved ha-avadim, it would have meant a servant of (to) servants.
[UNTO HIS BRETHREN.] To Cush, Mizraim and Put, the sons of Ham his father. There are some who say that the Cushites are enslaved because Noah cursed Ham. However, they have forgotten that the first king to rule after the flood was a Cushite. Thus it is written, and Cush begot

Nimrod…And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar (Gen. 10:8-10). 45 Thus the curse was put on the Canaanites and not on all of Ham's descendants.

Verse 26

BLESSED BE THE LORD, THE GOD OF SHEM. We are duty-bound to be bountiful in praise of the Lord, who is the God of Shem, for He will make Canaan a servant of God and Shem. 46 I.E.'s paraphrase of our verse. The meaning of our verse is, God will compel Canaan to serve Shem, for lamo (their) has the same meaning as la-hem (to them). 47 The second half of the verse literally reads, and let Canaan be a servant to them (lamo). I.E. points out that lamo means to them (la-hem) and refers to God and Shem who are mentioned in the first half of the verse. The vav of lamo is superfluous and is similar to the vav of tevi'emo (Thou bringest them in) (Ex. 15:17). 48 The vav of tevi'emo is also superfluous. Therefore the term "to them" is not encountered in Scripture, spelled either without a heh or a vav. 49 Since the term for them is either la-hem or lamo, the term lam is not found in Scripture (Netter). The Tetragrammaton is invoked in connection with Shem to honor Shem. 50 The ancestor of the Israelites who worshiped the Lord (Krinsky). It is not employed with regard to Japheth because he was not his brother's equal. Saadiah Gaon says that Cursed be Canaan is short for cursed be Canaan's father. 51 This answers the question: Why was Canaan cursed when it was in fact Ham who allowed his father to lie naked at the doorway of the tent? He says that In the presence of Hanamel my uncle (Jer. 32:12) is similar, as Hanamel was really Jeremiah's uncle's son. 52 Cf. Jer. 32:8. We thus see that Scripture employs such abridgments. However, it is possible that Hanamel was older than Jeremiah and the latter referred to him as "my uncle" because it was an honor for him to be called by his father's title. 53 The point is that Jeremiah wanted to honor his cousin who was older than he. He did so by calling him uncle. Hence Saadiah cannot offer proof from this verse that Scripture employs this type of abridgment. Similarly one's father's brother's wife is called aunt in Scripture. 54 An uncle is a dod, his wife is a dodah. She is so called in order to honor her, because she is married to one's uncle. See I.E. to Lev. 18:14. Similarly Lot is called Abraham's brother, rather than his nephew (Gen. 14:14). However, in our case there is no reason to refer to Ham by the name of his son. 55 What honor is there to Ham if he is referred to as Canaan?

Verse 27

[ENLARGE.] Saadiah also explains the word yaft (enlarge) as coming from the Hebrew word for beautiful (yafeh). However, his comment is not beautiful (yafeh). 56 A sarcastic pun, telling us that Saadiah is wrong. Yaft means he will enlarge. 57 Yafte. Compare Deut. 12:20. The Aramaic word for He shall enlarge (Deut. 12:20) is similar. 58 Onkelos renders ki yarchiv as are yafte (Deut. 12:20). Yaft (enlarge) is a hifil. It is like yard in And maketh him rule (yard) over kings (Is. 41:2). 59 The point is that yaft, like yard, is an abridged word. Yaft is short for yafteh and yard for yardeh. Both Shem and Japheth were blessed in this verse, for the meaning of And he shall dwell in the tents of Shem is: may God dwell in the tents of Shem. The previous verse (v. 26) relates the blessing with which Noah blessed God. 60 God rather than Shem is the object of the blessing. Hence in verse 26 Noah blessed God. In verse 27 he blessed Shem and Japheth. Thus the blessing of Shem in verse 27 is not redundant.
AND LET CANAAN BE THEIR SERVANT. To Shem, to Japheth and also to his brothers. Thus Canaan was to be a slave to all of the world, for from

Shem, Japheth and Canaan's brothers all of humanity is descended. This came to pass many years after the flood. 61 According to Krinsky, I.E.'s words apply to the blessing and curse uttered by Noah, namely, that God would dwell in the tents of Shem, that he would enlarge Japheth, and that Canaan would be a slave.

Chapter 10

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

KITTIM. Kittim is the name of one of Javan's sons. 1 Even though it is in the plural. I therefore explain in my comments on the Book of Daniel that Greeks and Romans 2 I.E. maintains that the brass sections of the giant statue dreamed of by Nebuchadnezzar allude to the Greek and Roman empires. See Daniel, Chap. 2 and Ibn Ezra's comment there on verse 39. I.E. identifies the Kittim with the Romans. (See his comments on Gen. 27:40). Since Kittim (the Romans) was the son of Javan (the Greeks) one symbol stands for both of them. constitute one kingdom. 3 Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a statue whose head was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay (Dan. 2:32, 34). Each of these metals symbolizes a kingdom. I.E. identifies the brass with the Greeks and the Romans, whom he considers one kingdom because they are one race.

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

NIMROD. Do not attempt to ascertain the meaning of any names encountered in the Bible if Scripture itself does not explain them. 4 The rabbis connect Nimrod with the word marad (to rebel). They tell us that Nimrod was so called because he caused people to rebel against God. See Erubin 53a.
Nimrod was the first to display man's power over the wild beasts for he was a mighty hunter.

Verse 9

The meaning of before the Lord (v. 9) is that Nimrod built altars and offered the animals he hunted as whole offerings to God. This is the literal meaning of the verse. However, its Midrashic interpretation is totally different. 5 Cf. Rashi. He ensnared men with his words and caused them to rebel against God. See also Nahmanides: "Ibn Ezra's words do not appear to be correct, for our rabbis know by tradition of Nimrod's wickedness."
WHEREFORE IT IS SAID. This proverb was also used in the days of Moses. 6 Hence the use of the present form, it is said, that is, we say today, today being the age in which the Torah was written.

Verse 10

Verse 11

[OUT OF THAT LAND WENT FORTH ASSHUR.] Asshur was the son of Japheth. 7 This comment is extremely difficult; Scripture nowhere says this. Indeed, in I.E.'s alternate commentary to Genesis he writes, "We do not know who was the father of Asshur." Some suggest that our text is corrupt, and on the basis of verse 22 emend it to: son of Shem (Weiser). The events related in this verse took place after the dispersion following the building of the Tower of Babel. Nimrod was the first king over Babel. 8 There was no Babel before the dispersion. Thus Nimrod's rule over Babel had to be after the dispersion. Hence what Scripture relates about Asshur had to happen after the dispersion (Netter). According to Seder Olam, Nimrod was king over the seventy who built the tower, and it was in his time that the dispersion took place. 9 This is not found in our editions of the Seder Olam. Krinsky points out that there are many citations quoted in the early sources from this work that are missing in our edition of the Seder Olam. From the fact that Nimrod was king during the time of the dispersion we see that what Asshur did happened later.

Verse 12

THE SAME IS THE GREAT CITY. It appears to me that this is connected to and builded Nineveh. However, it is also possible that it is connected to Resen or Calah. 10 Three cities are mentioned in the verse. Hence the same is the great city may be taken to refer to any one of them.

Verse 13

AND MIZRAIM BEGOT LUDIM. In my opinion, these are the names of countries, each of which was populated by a particular family. This is why all the names (in verses 13 and 14) are in the plural. Proof of this is the name Pathrusim. 11 Verse 14. The land itself was called the "country of Pathros" (Jer. 44:1), and its inhabitants called "Pathrusim." The same applies to all the names in verses 13 and 14. Hence, Pathros is the name of a place. Similarly all the names in verses 13 and 14 refer to names of places, their inhabitants taking the name of the place wherein they lived. Additional and definite proof that this interpretation is correct is the phrase whence went forth (v. 14), for the word whence 12 The Hebrew mi-sham indicates a place. alludes to a place.

Verse 14

[AND CAPHTORIM.] Mizraim also begat the Caphtorim. 13 And Caphtorim is not to be connected to whence went forth the Philistines, but to And Mizraim begot. The term begat is used in Scripture when referring to the father because the child comes from the strength and power of the father 14 An allusion to semen. The word yalad (begot) actually means to give birth and it is used when referring to the father (yalad) as well as the mother (yaledah) for the reason noted by I.E. (Netter). and is in his likeness and image.

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

AS THOU GOEST TOWARD GERAR. The word gerarah means to Gerar. 15 The heh at the end of the name of a place is in place of an el (to) before it. Hence gerarah means el Gerar, to Gerar (Krinsky).

Verse 20

THESE ARE THE SONS OF HAM, AFTER THEIR FAMILIES, AFTER THEIR TONGUES. Scripture says the same concerning the children of Japheth 16 Gen. 10:5. and the children of Shem. 17 Gen. 10:31.

Verse 21

[THE FATHER OF ALL THE CHILDREN OF EBER.] Scripture informs us that Shem was the father of the Hebrews for no one was greater than he, and the Lord was his God. Similarly it is written, Thus saith the Lord, the God of the Hebrews (ivrim) (Ex. 10:3). 18 I.E. identifies the children of Eber (ever) with the Hebrews (ivrim). On the other hand, the Bible tells us that Ham was the father of Canaan 19 The text reads, Canaan was the father of Ham. The text is obviously corrupt. Ham was the father of Canaan. Vat. Ebr. 38 reads, u-khena'an aviv cham. The vav of aviv was dropped in transmission. Thus aviv (his father) became avi (father of). for no one was baser that he. It is unfitting for the holy and profane to intermingle.
Scripture notes that Shem was the brother of Japheth the elder 20 This is the literal meaning of achi yefet ha-gadol. From the text it is not clear whether Japheth or Shem was the elder; the grammatical construction is such that elder may apply to either. I.E. is trying to explain why Scripture tells us that Shem was Japheth's brother, but does not say the same about Ham. to teach us that Japheth, too, was a worthy person. The Bible lists Shem, who was the youngest, before Japheth, 21 The Bible lists Noah's sons as Shem, Ham and Japheth (Gen. 5:32; 6:10). According to I.E. the order of their birth was Japheth, Ham and Shem (Krinsky). who was the elder, 22 Ibn Ezra assumes that elder applies to Japheth (see

note 20). out of respect to Shem. Proof that Japheth was the elder lies in Scripture's stating that Noah was five hundred years old when he begat his first son. 23 Gen. 5:32. There is no room for argument, for it is clear that Noah had no children prior to reaching the age of five hundred. The flood came when Noah was six hundred years old. 24 Gen. 7:6. Therefore if Shem was the eldest he would be one hundred and one years old when Noah and his sons came out of the ark. 25 The flood lasted a year. However, Scripture tells us Shem was a hundred years old, and begot Arpachshad two years after the flood (Gen. 11:10). 26 Hence Shem reached the age of 100 two years after the flood and could not have been begotten by Noah when the latter was 500 years old. Therefore Shem was not Noah's eldest son. Japheth was. Thus the elder in verse 21 refers to Japheth. Others say that Shem was the elder brother of Japheth, 27 This interpretation explains achi yefet ha-gadol to mean the elder brother of Japheth. According to this interpretation Shem is the eldest. and it is for this reason that Shem is mentioned first. They explain that Shem was born a few days after Noah entered his five hundredth year, for even a day in a year is considered a year. 28 Thus 499 years plus a few days is considered 500 years. They say that Noah was born in Iyyar 29 Noah was 499 years old in Iyyar. and Shem in Sivan. 30 Shem was thus born in Noah's 500th year. When the flood came Noah was five hundred and ninety-nine plus a number of days old. 31 In other words, Noah was in his 600th year when the flood began. Hence Shem was not a full ninety-nine years old when the flood started and was a hundred and one years plus a number of months old when his son Arpachshad was born. The meaning of two years after the flood (Gen. 11:10) therefore is to be interpreted as meaning that Arpachshad was born in the second year following the beginning of the flood. There are also those who maintain that the wife of Shem conceived five months after the start of the flood when the waters started decreasing. 32 Thus Arpachshad was born two years after the flood, i.e., in the second year following the start of the flood. Shem was thus one hundred years old when Arpachshad was born. 33 Those who put forth this interpretation agree with the second interpretation. However, they are bothered by one problem. If Shem was 100 years plus some months when Arpachshad was born, why does Scripture say that Shem was 100 years old at the time? It should consider him to be 101 since part of a year is considered a year. They solve this problem by assuming that Shem's wife conceived in the ark five months after the start of the flood, i.e., in Tishri, and gave birth to Arpachshad the following Sivan, some days before Shem's 100th birthday. Shem, according to this interpretation, was born in Sivan. Scripture thus tells us that Shem was a hundred years old when Arpachshad was born, i.e., 99 years plus. The Bible is thus consistent in listing the years (Cherez). There are ten similar instances in the Book of Kings. 34 Where part of a year is considered a year. Krinsky lists the 10 places as: I Kings 15:1, 2, 9; 22:52; II Kings 1:17; 3:1; 8:16; 9:29; 13:10; 14:23; 15:1; 17:1.

Chapter 11

Verse 1

ONE LANGUAGE. When the word one in the feminine is in the absolute it is vocalized with a segol beneath the alef (echat). However, when it is in the construct it is vocalized with a pattach beneath the alef (achat). In my book on grammar I have explained why the dalet is missing in the feminine word for one. 1 The masculine word for one is echad ; hence the feminine should be achdat. A logical reading of Scripture indicates that the dispersion took place one hundred years after the flood, and that

Peleg, which means divided, was so named because at the time of his birth the earth was divided (Gen. 10:25). 2 People were named for events that occurred at the time of their birth. A careful computation of the years from the flood to the birth of Peleg comes to about 100 years. Arpachshad was born two years after the flood; 35 years later he had Shelah. Shelah was 30 when he begot Eber; Eber was 34 when he begot Peleg. Therefore the dispersion took place about 100 years after the flood (Weiser). Peleg is similar to palga, the Aramaic word for half. Palge (rivers) in rivers of water (palge mayim) (Ps. 119:136) is identical. It refers to the branches into which the river divides. The names given to Ichabod (I Sam. 4:21) 3 And she named the child Ichabod, saying: 'The glory is departed from Israel,' because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband (I Sam. 4:21). and Immanuel, 4 Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: behold, the young woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (God is with us) (Is. 7:14). who was the son of the prophet Isaiah (Is. 7:14), are similar. Nevertheless, the words of the Seder Olam are also correct, and we will rely upon them. 5 To the effect that the dispersion took place at the end of Peleg's life. Seder Olam, Chap. 1. If this is so, then Abraham was one of the builders of the tower of Babel. 6 According to the Seder Olam, Abraham was 48 years old when the dispersion took place (Chap. 1). Abraham was a descendant of Peleg. If Peleg was born at the time of the dispersion, this would of course preclude Abraham's being at the tower of Babel. However, if Peleg was so named because the dispersion took place at the end of his life, which consisted of 239 years (v. 18 and 19), then by computing the years listed in verses 18-26 we conclude that Abraham was 48 years old at the time of the building of the tower of Babel. The computation is as follows: Peleg was born 239 years before the dispersion since the latter took place at the end of his life. Peleg was 30 when he begat Reu. Reu was 32 when he begat Serug. Serug was 30 when he begat Nahor. Nahor was 29 when he begat Terah. Terah was 70 when he begat Abraham. We thus have a total of 191. Two hundred thirty-nine minus 191 is 48. Hence Abraham was 48 at the time of the dispersion. Do not be amazed at this, 7 That is, that Abraham would participate in such a venture. Noah and Shem also took part in it. It is I.E.'s belief that the builders of the Tower did not commit any sin. I.E. will elaborate on this later on in his commentary. for Noah and Shem were also there. 8 They, too, were saintly men and yet participated in the building of the tower. Indeed, Shem didn't die till Jacob was over fifty. 9 According to the Seder Olam, Chap. 1, Jacob studied Torah with Shem for 50 years. The meaning of safah echat is one language. It appears to me that the one language was Hebrew. Proof of this are the names Adam, Eve, Cain, Seth and Peleg. 10 All of these are derived from Hebrew roots.
[AND OF ONE SPEECH.] Unlike today, when there are words which not everybody speaking a given language will understand, the learned and the ignorant in those days spoke alike. Achadim (one) is the plural of echad. 11 Sometimes the word achadim has the meaning of few. Cf. Gen. 27:44, yamim achadim (a few days). I.E. emphasizes that here it means one.

Verse 2

[AS THEY JOURNEYED EAST.] This verse shows that the mountains of Ararat are in the east. 12 The verse literally reads: as they journeyed from the east, i.e., from Mt. Ararat or its vicinity. This shows that Mt. Ararat is in the east (Krinsky).
[THAT THEY FOUND A PLAIN.] Its meaning is, they searched for a good place to build a state. Eventually they found this plain. The meaning of bikah (plain) is a flat area; it is the opposite of the rough places (Is. 40:4). 13 Is. 40:4 reads, And the rough places (shall be made) a plain (le-vikah). We thus see that bikah is the opposite of rough places. Hence

it must refer to a level area. As the cattle go down into the valley (Ba-bikah) (Is. 63:14) is similar. Bikah possibly refers to a plain between mountains because a valley appears to be a split in the hills. 14 Baka means split. Thus bikah (valley) means a split in the mountains.

Verse 3

LET US MAKE BRICK. Nilbenah (let us make brick) comes from the same root as levenim (bricks). Even though levenim ends in a mem, it is a feminine word. 15 A feminine plural ends in a vav, tav. The singular of levenim is levenah, hence the feminine va-tehi in conjunction with ha-levenah. Such irregular feminine plural endings are also found in the words nashim (women) and pilagshim (concubines). They baked the bricks until they became hard. A building made from such material is very strong and will not dissolve in water or fall apart when burned.
AND THEY HAD BRICK FOR STONE. In place of stone.
AND SLIME. In place of mortar. The meaning of chemar (slime) is the same as its Arabic cognate. 16 Chamarah in Arabic is a red earthen substance (Weiser). The builders of the tower were not fools to believe that they could actually ascend the heavens. Neither were they afraid that God would bring another flood, for Noah and his children, to whom the Almighty swore never to bring another deluge, were there and being descendents of Noah and his children they were subservient to them. 17 If their intention was to rebel against God, then Noah and Shem would have stopped them. I.E. rejects the notion that the builders of the tower wanted to ascend the heavens and wage war with God. Cf. San. 109a. Scripture reveals their intention and ultimate goal. They wanted to build a great city to dwell in, and a very tall tower to ensure their fame and glory and to serve as a sign indicating the place of the city to those outside it, such as shepherds. The tower, as long as it stood, would also perpetuate their names after their deaths. This is the meaning of and let us make us a name.

Verse 4

The word havah (come) means give; 18 The root yod, heh, bet means give. Cf. Rashi on Gen. 38:16: “The expression havah denotes preparation except where it is to be rendered giving, and even in those instances where havah denotes preparation it is close in meaning to giving.” its root is yod, heh, bet, as is clear from Cast thy burden (yehavecha) upon the Lord (Ps. 55:23). Because haveh is used often, it remains the same in both the feminine and the plural. Compare, come (havah), 19 Strictly speaking, since many are being addressed, havu should be used. let us deal wisely with them (Ex. 1:10), and Come (havah), 20 Since a female is being addressed havi should be used. I pray thee, let me come in unto thee (Gen. 38:16).
Do not be surprised at the phrase with its top in heaven. Moses similarly said, the cities are great and fortified up to heaven (Deut. 1:28). 21 The words of Moses are definitely not to be taken literally. Similarly neither is with its top in heaven. The builders of the tower hoped that their city and tower would prevent them from dispersing, but this was not God’s will. However, they did not know this. 22 They did not intend to rebel against God. They were merely ignorant of His will.

Verse 5

[AND THE LORD CAME DOWN.] The Bible states this because all things on earth below are dependent upon the powers on high; all actions are arranged from heaven. Therefore God is referred to as the One Who rideth upon the heaven (Deut. 33:26) and the One who is enthroned in the heavens

(Ps. 123:1). 23 “God cannot come into contact with the material and changeable” (Husik, p. 191). He rules the lower world via the heavenly beings. “Ibn Ezra holds that the events of the sublunar world are governed by the positions and motions of the heavenly bodies, which in turn are determined by the intelligences or angels” (Ibid., p. 192). The use of the term And the Lord came down is an anthropomorphism.

Verse 6

AND THE LORD SAID: BEHOLD, THEY ARE ONE PEOPLE. God said this to the angels. This took place before And the Lord came down. Its meaning is: And the Lord came down because he said, Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, etc. 24 It is unlikely that God would first go down and then say, Come, let us go down (Filwarg). In other words, verse 5 belongs after verse 7 (Cherez). Our translation follows Filwarg who reads terem in place of ta’am.
ONE PEOPLE. They have one religion. Different religions create jealousy and hatred among people. The same is true with regard to different languages. That is why the king of Persia and Media commanded that every man should bear rule in his own house, and speak according to the language of his people (Es. 1:22). 25 The use of only one language per household would prevent strife in that family. The heh of hachillam (what they begin) is vocalized with a pattach because of the chet which follows it. 26
The heh should have been vocalized with a chataf pattach as is the rule concerning all double roots in the hifil perfect. The heh of hachiloti (I have begun) (Deut. 2:31) is similarly vocalized.
[WITHHOLDEN.] Yibbatzer means will be withholden. Betzurot (fortified) in fortified (betzurot) cities (Deut. 3:5) 27 Cities so constructed that they hold back any enemy from entering. is like it. The meaning of our verse is: If I permit them to go on, they will think that they can do whatever they wish.
[THEY PURPOSE.] Yazemu (they purpose) has the same meaning as zamemu (devised). 28 Cf. Deut. 19:19. Yazemu comes from the root yod, zayin, mem ; zamemu from the root, zayin, mem, mem. However, they come from different roots.

Verse 7

COME, LET US GO DOWN. This is what God said to the angels.
[AND THERE CONFOUND THEIR LANGUAGE.] All the grammarians claim that ve-navelah (and confound) is a nifal. 29 According to this interpretation ve-navelah sham sefatam (and there confound their language) means, and their language will be there confounded, the nun of ve-navelah being the nun of the nifal. They compare it to ve-navekah (and shall be made empty) in And the spirit of Egypt shall be made empty (ve-navekah) (Is. 19:3) and to navelah (fadeth) in The earth fainteth and fadeth away (navelah) (Is. 24:4). However, their interpretation is farfetched. Why would the Bible say: Come, let us go down and their language will be confounded, when their language was not confounded because God and the angels went down? 30 God’s going down did not in itself confound their language. Ve-navelah can only be interpreted as an active verb. 31 Meaning, and we will confound, its nun not being the sign of the nifal but of a first person plural imperfect prefix. Proof of this is Scripture’s stating at the close of this incident, because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth (v. 9). The following is then the grammatical explanation of ve-navelah. It is a hifil. Scripture should have employed the entire root and read ve-navlilah, 32 This is the way a double root is conjugated in the hifil. The root of ve-navelah is bet, lamed, lamed. or ve-navellah 33 This is the way a double root is conjugated in the hifil

when one of the letters of the double root is dropped (swallowed) in the conjugation. In this case ve-navelah has a tzere beneath the bet and a dagesh forte in the lamed. The dagesh doubles the lamed and thus compensates for the missing lamed. if one of the two lameds of its double root was swallowed. In the latter case it would have followed the paradigm of ve-nasebbah (let us bring back) 34 The root of which is samekh, bet, bet in and let us bring back (ve-nasebbah) the ark of our God (I Chron. 13:3). Our word reads ve-navelah because one of the lameds of the root was dropped without the remaining lamed receiving a dagesh forte to make up for it. The sages who translated the Torah into Greek correctly rendered ve-navelah as I will confound, 35 The sages thus understood ve-navelah as an active form, we will confound. rather than we will confound. 36 They did this so that the readers of their translation would not think there are many gods. Cf. Megillah 9a. If the above mentioned grammarians are correct, why did the sages omit the nun? 37 If ve-navelah is passive (nifal), meaning it will be confounded, why did the sages who translated the Bible into Greek change ve-navelah to ve-avelah? Obviously the sages saw it as active, meaning we will confound, hence the change from the plural to the singular. Some say that the people building the tower started hating each other and each one invented a new language. Others say that the One who grants knowledge to man caused them to forget their language. In my opinion, they were first scattered. After their dispersion Nimrod ruled over Babel and other kings arose. With the passage of time and the death of the first generation to be scattered, the original language was forgotten. 38 According to I.E. the confounding of the language did not take place at one time; it was a slow process. God first dispersed them. This led to the eventual confounding of the original language. God scattered the people for their own benefit. He similarly said, and replenish the earth (Gen. 1:28). 39 That is, populate all of the earth, not merely one area of it.

Verse 8

[AND THEY LEFT OFF TO BUILD THE CITY.] Its meaning is: they left off from completing the city because part of the city and the tower had by this time been built. This is so for Scripture reads, the city and the tower, which the children of men builded (v. 5). 40 Verse 5 tells us that God came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. This indicates that some part of the tower and city had already been completed. It is also possible that the meaning of which the children of men builded is: which the children of men intended to build. 41 According to this interpretation verse 5 should be interpreted to mean: God came down to see the tower and city which the children of men intended to build. He stopped them before they commenced building. Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel (Josh. 24:9) 42 Balak never fought Israel. The meaning of the verse is: then Balak…arose and intended to fight Israel. is similar. The first of these interpretations appeals to me.

Verse 9

BABEL. Bavel (Babel) is made up of the words ba (came) and bel (confusion), 43 According to I.E. bel is a noun from the root bet, lamed, lamed (Weiser). Bavel thus means a confusion came. with the alef missing. Bagad 44 The alef of ba in bagad is missing. Bagad is a compound of ba and gad. (Fortune is come) (Gen. 30:11) and Bamah (high place) (Ezek. 20:29) 45 Ezek. 20:29 explains the word bamah (a high place) as coming from the word ba (visit) and mah (what). Thus the alef is missing. are similar.

Verse 10

[TWO YEARS AFTER THE FLOOD.] I have already explained the meaning of this in the verse the elder brother of Japheth (Gen. 10:21). 46 In his comments on Gen. 10:32, I.E. explains that two years after the flood means a year and some days into the second year following the flood. It is possible that Peleg was given this name on the day of his death, the reason for this being as follows: Shem lived for five hundred years following the flood, Arpachshad lived for four hundred and thirty-eight years, his son Shelah lived four hundred and thirty-three years, and his son Eber four hundred and sixty-four years. Now Peleg lived two hundred and thirty-nine years. Thus Peleg's life span was half that of his ancestors. Reu, the son of Peleg, similarly lived to the same age as Peleg. Reu's son Serug also lived about the same number of years as Peleg and Reu. 47 For textual proof of these life spans see verses 11-23. This, then, is the general rule: no one after Peleg, aside from his son, ever lived to be two hundred and thirty-nine years. 48 I.E. suggests that Peleg was so called at his death because in his time the life span of man was cut in half. Peleg, as I.E. notes above (Gen. 10:25), means half. He now interprets for in his days was the earth divided (10:25) to mean in his days was the life span of the earth's inhabitants cut in half. Some say that those who built the tower numbered seventy and hence were divided into seventy languages upon their dispersion. 49 According to Rabbinic tradition there are 70 primary languages. If you count the sons of Shem, Japheth and Ham you will find them to be seventy. 50 Listed in Chap. 10 of Genesis. Those who put forward this interpretation did this. However, they are incorrect. First of all Pathrusim and Casluhim 51 Listed among the descendants of Ham in Gen. 10:14. are not the names of two individuals. 52 They are the names of nations. Hence they can't count as two people. Thus we already have more than 70. Furthermore, they neglect to include in the seventy Noah and his sons. 53 Who were alive at the time of the building of the tower. Again we have more than 70. According to the Seder Olam the builders of the tower numbered thousands and ten thousands. 54 According to the Seder Olam the dispersion took place when Abraham was 48 years old. By then the world's population had grown to the number indicated by I.E. (Weiser).

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

[AND BEGOT ABRAM.] Abraham was born in a place called Ur of the Chaldees. Therefore glorify ye the Lord in the regions of light (be-urim) (Is. 24:15) 55 In Isaiah, I.E. offers two definitions of the word urim : (a) boundaries, i.e., countries or regions; (b) valleys. According to (a) the verse reads: in the regions, honor God. According to (b) the verse should read: In the valleys honor God. The same apparently applies to the term Ur Chasdim. Hence Ur Chasdim means the land of the Chaldees, or the valley of the Chaldees. In Isaiah, I.E. prefers interpretation (a). is like it. It appears to me that at the time of Abraham's birth Ur of the Chaldees had another name since the Chaldees are descended from Nahor, the brother of Abraham, 56 Via his son Chesed. Cf. Gen. 22:22. and that in writing the Torah Moses used the name in vogue in his time when he cited Ur of the Chaldees. Proof that Abraham was born in Ur of the Chaldees can be found in the fact that Haran died there and Scripture says, And Haran died…in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees (v. 20). 57 I.E. interprets his nativity as referring to the entire family of Terah (Krinsky). It is also possible that the Chaldees made a flame (altar) and the place thereof was called Ur (the flame, altar) of the Chaldees. In this instance Ur has the meaning of fire, as in whose fire (ur) is in Zion (Is. 31:9). 58 I.E. earlier explains Ur as meaning a

region or valley (see note 55). He now interprets it to mean a fire (altar).

Verse 27

Verse 28

[IN THE PRESENCE OF.] In front of his father; i.e., Terah witnessed his death. In the presence of Aaron their father (Num. 3:4) 59 The texts literally state: before the face of. I.E. interprets this to mean in the presence of. Thus Haran died in the presence of Terah. Similarly Aaron witnessed the death of Nadab and Abihu (Krinsky). is analogous.

Verse 29

[AND THE NAME OF NAHOR'S WIFE, MILCAH.] The Bible gives the name of Nahor's wife in order to let us know the pedigree of Rebekah, Rachel and Leah. 60 See Gen. 22:20-23. Our sages, of blessed memory, identified Iscah with Sarah. 61 Sanhedrin 69b. If this is a tradition we will accept it. 62 There is no proof from Scripture that it is so; hence if it is an exegetical point we may dispute it. However, if it is a tradition passed on to the Talmudic sages, we must accept it. Those who say that Abraham rather than Sarah was sterile are saying the opposite of what Scripture says. 63 Scripture explicitly states in verse 30, And Sarai was barren. Additional proof that they are wrong is the fact that Abraham sired Ishmael and had children with Keturah.I do not find the explanation of those who say that Sarah was Abraham's sister to be acceptable. 64 They base themselves on Abraham's statement: And moreover she (Sarai) is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father (Gen. 20:12). I.E. in his comment on Gen. 20:12 argues that Abraham invented a fact in order to excuse his actions. If Sarah was really Abraham's sister, Scripture would have stated, 65 In verse 31. And Terah took Abram his son, and Sarai his daughter, the wife of Abram his son. Similarly if Sarah was the sister of Lot 66 If we identify Sarai with Iscah, then Sarai is Lot's sister, since Haran was the father of both Lot and Iscah (v. 29 and 31) (Cherez). the Bible would have stated, "and Sarai the daughter of his son," as it does in the case of Lot. 67 The Bible states with regard to Lot, And Terah took…Lot the son of Haran, his son's son (v. 31). It does not say the same with regard to Sarai. It merely says, and Sarai his daughter-in-law. It is possible that Terah's son Nahor left for Haran before his father. On the other hand he may have left for Haran after his father went there. 68 The Bible doesn't mention that Terah took Nahor as it does with regard to Abraham. However, we find Nahor's children living in Haran. Thus it appears that he, too, journeyed there, hence I.E.'s comment. It appears to me that the portion containing the command, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee (Gen. 12:1), was conveyed to Abraham before what is recorded in the verse reading, And Terah took Abram…Lot…Sarai…to go into the land of Canaan. 69 Gen. 12:1 occurred before Gen. 11:31. Similarly elsewhere the Pentateuch states, And the Lord spoke unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt (Num. 1:1); and then, And it came to pass in the first month in the second year (Ex. 40:17). 70 Prima facie this is a difficult comment. Num. 1:1 follows Ex. 40:17; hence the verses are in chronological sequence. I.E. probably intended to cite Num. 9:1, rather than Ex. 40:17. The former literally reads: In the second year…in the first month. He apparently cited from memory and misquoted. Perhaps he wanted to note

that Num. 7 records the setting up of the Tabernacle and the sacrifices then offered by the princes of the tribes. However, Ex. 40:17 tells us that the tabernacle was erected on the first day of the first month in the second year following the Exodus. We thus see that what is described in Num. 1 occurred after what is described in Num. 7 (Krinsky). Proof of the above 71 That Get thee out, etc., was told to Abraham before And Terah took, etc. If God had not yet told Abraham to go to Canaan, why did Terah take his family there? I.E. apparently believes that the impetus behind Terah's journey to Canaan was God's command to Abraham, recorded in Gen. 12:1 (Weiser). is found in And they went forth…to go into the land of Canaan (v. 31). When Terah came to Haran, the place found favor in his eyes. He settled there and eventually died there. The general rule thus is that the Bible does not always list events in chronological order.

Chapter 12

Verse 1

GET THEE OUT. God commanded Abraham while he was yet in Ur of the Chaldees to leave his country, his place of birth and also his father's house. The reason God told Abraham to leave his father's house is that the Lord knew that, although he set out for Canaan, Terah would settle in Haran. 1 Ibn Ezra implies that had Terah gone to Canaan then God would not have commanded Abraham to separate himself from his father. Terah did not die until sixty years after Abraham left his father's house in Haran. 2 Terah was 70 when Abraham was born (Gen. 11:26). Abraham was 75 when he left Haran (Gen. 12:4). Terah was thus 145 when Abraham left him. Terah lived 205 years (Gen. 11:32). Hence Terah lived another 60 years after Abraham left Haran. Thus the command "Get thee out" could not have come after Terah's death, as a cursory reading of Scripture would indicate (Krinsky). However, the Bible does not tell us how old he was when he left Ur of the Chaldees. 3 He refers to Abraham (Cherez). The Bible tells us how old Abraham was when he left Haran (v. 4) but does not tell us his age when he left Ur of the Chaldees. Had the Bible told us this, we would then know how long Abraham dwelt in Haran. Weiser explains he as referring to Terah. I.E.'s point remains the same. After telling Abraham to go unto the land that I will show thee, God revealed his secret to him, 4 He told him which land He had in mind. for we read: and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan (v. 5). It is also possible that I will show thee refers to for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it (Gen. 13:15). 5 The meaning of the phrase is: the land which I will show thee will I give to thee (Cohen). Abraham went from place to place. When he came to Canaan God then told him, this is the land that I have chosen for you (Cherez). According to this interpretation God did not at this point reveal to Abraham his ultimate destination.

Verse 2

Verse 3

THEM THAT BLESS THEE. This word is in the plural.
AND HIM THAT CURSETH THEE. This word is in the singular.

Verse 4

Verse 5

THEIR SUBSTANCE. Their cattle. 6 The term used by Ibn Ezra is mikneh, which includes cows, sheep, asses and camels. Rekhusham (their substance) in And the land was not able to bear them…for their (rekhusham) substance (i.e., their cattle) was great (Gen. 13:6) is similar.
AND THE SOULS THAT THEY HAD GOTTEN IN HARAN. Servants born into their household. 7 Had gotten thus means: were born to them (Weiser). It is also possible that had gotten means bought. 8 Previously Ibn Ezra explained gotten as meaning born. He now explains it to mean bought (Weiser). Hath gotten in My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth (Deut. 8:17) is similar. Others say that the souls that they had gotten in Haran refers to the people to whom Abraham showed the truth, to worship God. 9 Bereshit Rabbah 39:14. Cf. Rashi.
[AND THEY WENT FORTH TO GO.] To the place that God had told them to go.

Verse 6

[SHECHEM.] Shechem 10 Like Ur of the Chaldees. was the name used by Moses because it was the name by which the city was known in his time. Shechem was not yet born in Abraham's day. 11 According to Ibn Ezra, Shechem was named after Shechem son of Hamor. Cf. Gen. 34:2.
TEREBINTH. Elon (terebinth) has the same meaning as elah (terebinth). 12 Cf. Is. 6:13 and Hos. 4:13. Elon is a type of elah (Krinsky). They are trees. Others say that elon means a field, 13 That is, the field of Paran, as seen from Gen. 14:6. See also Onkelos on this verse. as in unto El paran (Gen. 14:6).
MOREH. Some identify him with Mamre, the confederate of Abraham. However, it is possible they are not to be so identified and Elon Moreh is the name of a place.
AND THE CANAANITE WAS THEN IN THE LAND. It is possible that the Canaanites seized the land of Canaan from some other tribe at that time. 14 The Canaanite was then, not before this, in the land. Cf. Rashi: "The Canaanite was then engaged in conquering the land of Israel from the seed of Shem." Should this interpretation be incorrect, then there is a secret meaning to the text. Let the one who understands it remain silent. 15 The verse implies that the Canaanite was in the land then but not now (Krinsky). Since the Canaanite was in the land during the days of Moses, this clause would appear to be post-Mosaic.

Verse 7

AND THE LORD APPEARED. In a prophetic vision. Va-yera (appeared) is a nifal. It is vocalized with a tzere to make up for the dagesh which should have been placed in the resh as compensation for the missing nun of the nifal conjugation. 16 The nun of the nifal is omitted in the imperfect. Hence all imperfect nifal forms have a dagesh in the first letter of the root, i.e., yikkatev, rather than yikhatev. However, the resh of ra'ah (saw), from the root resh, alef, heh, cannot receive a dagesh. Hence it is preceded by a tzere, rather than a chirik. Va-yera is an imperfect changed into a perfect by the vav conversive.
WHO APPEARED UNTO HIM. Nireh is a participle belonging to the above-mentioned conjugation (nifal). Na'aseh (prepared) in Now that which was prepared (na'aseh) for one day (Neh. 5:18) is similar.

Verse 8

AND HE REMOVED. Va-yatek (and he removed) is a transitive verb, in the hifil. However, ve-yetak (removed) in Or shall the rock be removed (ve-yetak) out of its place (Job 18:4) is intransitive. The object of And he removed is his tent. 17 Since va-yatek (and he removed) is transitive, it does not mean he removed himself but he removed his tent. His tent is also the object of he pitched. The meaning (of va-yatek) is: he caused to move. Va-yet (he pitched) is vocalized with a tzere to make up for the missing nun which is the first root letter of va-yet (he pitched). 18 The root of va-yet (pitched) is nun, tet, ayin. We would have expected the word to be vocalized with a chirik. Compare, va-yitteh, hence I.E.'s comment. Ve-yez (is dashed) in And their lifeblood is dashed (ve-yez) (Is. 63:3) is similar. 19 The root of ve-yez (is dashed) is nun, zayin, heh. Both are transitive verbs. 20 Va-yatek and va-yet (Krinsky) or va-yet and ve-yez (Cherez).
[ON THE WEST.] The word mi-yam means on the west. Yam (sea) means west because the great Spanish Sea (yam, i.e., the Mediterranean) is the western border of the land of Israel. The latter sea is not the Atlantic, the Atlantic being far from the aforementioned country. Abraham journeyed from east of Beth-el westward until Ai was east of his camp. 21 I.E. assumes that Abraham journeyed from east to west. He crossed over Ai but stopped before Beth-el. Thus Beth-el was on his west and Ai on his east. However, the interpretation presents a problem. Shechem lies north of Beth-el and Ai. Thus Abraham traveled south not west.
[AND CALLED UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD.] This means he prayed there. It may also mean that he called upon men to worship the Lord.

Verse 9

TOWARD THE SOUTH. Negev means south and it means the same in Aramaic. 22 I.E.'s point is that negev is an Aramaic word. Negev in Aramaic means dry as we see from Onkelos, who renders the waters were dried up (Gen. 8:13) as negivu mayya. The south is called Negev (dry) because it is hot there, and the heat parches the land. This is the way for that thou hast set me in the Southlands (eretz ha-negev) 23 That is, eretz ha-negev means a dry land. give me therefore springs of water (Josh. 15:19) should be understood.

Verse 10

AND THERE WAS A FAMINE IN THE LAND. In the land of Canaan.

Verse 11

WHEN HE WAS COME NEAR. When he caused his camp to come near. 24 I.E. takes hikriv (he came near) to be a transitive verb, its meaning being: when he caused to come near, i.e., when he caused his camp to come near. On the other hand, hikriv (when he came near) may be intransitive. 25 In this case hikriv is to be rendered, when he came near. These two interpretations are possible because there are verbs which can be transitive and intransitive.
[NOW.] Na means now. Na in Behold now (na), I am old (Gen. 27:2), and Woe (na) unto us (Lam. 5:16) 26 According to Ibn Ezra this should be rendered: woe now unto us. are similar. The reverse of Hebrew is the case in Arabic. 27 The Arabic word for now is malan, rather than malna (Weiser).
[BEHOLD NOW, I KNOW.] There were women as beautiful as Sarah in her native country, 28 Scripture emphasizes now I know, i.e., before I didn't. This is so because in the country from which she came there were other beautiful women. In Egypt Sarah's beauty stood out. but in Egypt and the southern land there was none as beautiful. The reason for this is

that people's appearance is shaped by the climate. 29 According to I.E. the climate of southern countries is not conducive to the development of beautiful women.
[BUT THEE THEY WILL KEEP ALIVE.] They will provide for all of your needs. Abraham said this because those were days of famine.

Verse 12

Verse 13

[THOU ART MY SISTER.] Achoti (my sister) is penultimately accented 30 Ordinarily the accent would be placed on the last syllable. because the word which follows it, at (thou), is accented on the first letter. Kara laylah (he called night) (Gen. 1:5) is similar. 31 Ordinarily the accent would be placed on the last syllable of kara. The preceding is a general rule in Hebrew grammar. 32 When the cantillical notes connect two words and the second word is penultimately accented, so is the first word even though it is ordinarily ultimately accented. The tav of at (thou) receives a dagesh to make up for the missing nun, for the word at (thou) comes from the same root as ani (I). 33 Hence thou in the feminine should be ant, in the masculine antah (Netter). The printed editions read, the word attah comes from the same root as ani. Vat. Ebr. 38 reads, the word at comes from the same root as ani. Since I.E. deals with the feminine, the reading of Vat. Ebr. 38 is to be preferred.
BECAUSE OF THEE. Bi-glalekh (because of thee) and ba-avurekh (for thy sake) always have a bet prefixed to each. 34 The forms gelalekh (gelal) or avurekh (avur) are not used. The poet who omits this bet errs. 35 Literally, turns aside from discretion. Ibn Ezra uses a term from Prov. 11:22, As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, So is a fair woman that turneth aside from discretion. He implies that the poet who deliberately misuses language is like a fair woman who turns aside from discretion. The reference might be to Rabbi Simon ben Isaac of Mayence, an eleventh century liturgical poet who wrote, avur ki fanah yom (now that the day has declined). He should have written ba-avur fanah yom. Rabbi Simon's composition is found in the concluding service of the Day of Atonement (Cherez). It should be noted that I.E. employs a pun. Shar is a poet. Sar means tumeth aside, hence ha-shar sar, the poet turneth aside.
[THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH ME.] They will give me gifts and presents. And so it is written, And he dealt well with Abram for her sake; and he had sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servant, and she-asses, and camels (v. 16).

Verse 14

Verse 15

[AND PRAISED]. The dagesh which should have been placed in the first lamed of va-yehalelu 36 Va-yehalelu (they praised) is a pi'el. According to the rules of Hebrew grammar a dagesh is placed in the middle letter of the root in a verb conjugated in the pi'el. (and praised) is omitted in order to simplify the word's pronunciation. 37 Va-yehalelu is, as noted above, a pi'el and should thus have a dagesh in its middle root letter. However, a dagesh would double the lamed. Thus the word would read as if there were three lameds in it, viz., va-yehallelu, and complicate its pronunciation. Va-etpalelah (and I prayed) (Dan. 9:4) is identical. 38 Va-etpalelah is in the hitpa'el. Here, too, a dagesh is placed in the

middle root letter. However, it is omitted in our word for the reasons indicated in note 37.
AND THE WOMAN WAS TAKEN. Va-tukkach (and she was taken) is a hofal. This is so even though it is not found in the hifil. 39 Hofal is the passive form of hifil. If a word is found in the passive voice we would expect it to be found in the active voice as well. However, this is not the case with the root lamed, kof, chet, which is found in the hofal and not in the hifil. Va-tushlekhi (but thou wast cast out) (Ezek. 16:5) is an example of a hofal wherein the entire root is present. 40 In the root lamed, kof, chet (take) the lamed drops out in the imperfect. In shin, lamed, caf (cast) no letter drops out. It belongs to those verbs classified as shelemim, whole roots.

Verse 16

Verse 17

AND THE LORD PLAGUED PHARAOH…BECAUSE OF SARAI. The term al devar means because. Al devar 's meaning is al zeh ha-davar (on account of this thing). 41 Hence al devar means because. According to the Midrash al devar Sarai means according to Sarah's word. (Cf. Rashi.) Hence I.E.'s comment.

Verse 18

[THOU TELL ME.] The root of higgadta (thou tell) is nun, gimel, dalet.

Verse 19

[SO I TOOK HER TO BE MY WIFE.] This indicates that Pharaoh took her to be his wife, to sleep with her. God brought plagues upon him to prevent him from touching her. The Lord sent these plagues to protect the wife of the one whom he loved. The plagues were so severe that Pharaoh was unable to touch Sarah. The following is analogous: When thou goest forth to battle against thine enemies…and seest among the captives a woman of goodly form, and thou hast a desire unto her, and takest her to thee to wife. The Bible then says, then thou shalt bring her home to thy house; and she shall shave her head. It then concludes, and after that thou mayest go in unto her (Deut. 21:10-13). 42 Ibn Ezra argues that wife here has the meaning of a sexual partner as it does in Deuteronomy. For it first says, "and takest her to thee to wife" and concludes with "thou mayest go into her" (Weiser). Krinsky and Cherez argue that I.E. was disturbed by the term took her which implies that Pharaoh had intercourse with Sarah. Hence I.E. points out that Scripture is merely relating Pharaoh's intentions; i.e., he took her to be his wife but God intervened before he had a chance to sleep with her. I.E. quotes Deut 21:10 where "and thou takest her to wife" similarly does not mean "and sleeps with her" because one cannot have intercourse with a captive woman until certain procedures described in Deut. 21 are first undergone.
[AND GO THY WAY.] The vav of va-lekh (and go thy way) is vocalized with a kamatz 43 The vav would ordinarily be vocalized with a sheva. because it is prefixed to a word with a cantillical note that ends a phrase. The vav of va-yayin (and wine) in bread and wine (Gen. 14:18) is similar.

Verse 20

AND THEY BROUGHT HIM ON THE WAY. They honorably escorted him. 44 Va-yeshallechu oto (and they brought him on the way) might conceivably be

translated as they sent him away; i.e., they expelled him, hence I.E.'s comment. And Abraham went with them 45 Abraham obviously did not expel the angels, he accompanied them out of respect. to bring them on the way (Gen. 18:16) is similar.
[AND PHARAOH GAVE MEN CHARGE CONCERNING HIM.] It appears to me that this clause indicates that Pharaoh issued a command to his people concerning Abraham. He warned and charged that it be announced that no one harm Abraham and his wife. 46 In other words, gave men charge concerning him is not to be connected to and they brought him on the way. Gave men charge, etc., means he issued commands that Abraham not be molested; and they brought him on the way means they escorted him. I.E. interprets this verse thus because he believes that the word tzivvah (commanded, charged) with the preposition al (on) involves a prohibition. Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 2:16 (Filwarg).

Chapter 13

Verse 1

[AND ABRAM WENT UP.] I have grammatically explained the word va-ya'al (and went up) in my Book of Foundation. 1 Va-ya'al (and he went up) is short for va-ya'aleh.

Verse 2

AND ABRAM WAS VERY RICH. Ve-avram kaved me'od (literally, Abram was very heavy) means that Abraham had great wealth. Whoever is laden with riches moves heavily (with difficulty). 2 Hence the use of the term kaved (heavy) for rich. Don't you see that the Hebrew word for honor (kavod) comes from the same root as the word for heavy (koved) in A stone is heavy (koved even) (Prov. 27:3). Conversely, the word for shame (kalon) comes from the same root as the word for light (kal). Compare, light of foot (kal beraglav) (II Sam. 2:18). 3 We thus see that the root caf, bet, dalet in its various forms means heavy. Kavod (honor) really means heavy with glory. Similarly kaved means heavy with possessions. Conversely, kalon comes from "light," i.e., not burdened with glory. Abraham possessed herds of cattle and a large amount of gold and silver. 4 Hence the Bible describes Abraham as being kaved, heavy because of his possessions (Krinsky).

Verse 3

ON HIS JOURNEYS. Abraham made many stops on his journey from the south to Beth-el which is in the north. He came unto the place of the altar (v. 4) to give thanks to God for ensuring his safe return.

Verse 4

Verse 5

AND TENTS. I believe that ohel (tent), in the singular, follows the paradigm of kodesh (holy). It is always found in Scripture following this form. 5 Kodesh is vocalized cholam, segol. Similarly, ohel. The latter is the term used in the Bible for tent. In the plural, its alef is vocalized with a chataf kamatz, as in the verse ye shall dwell in tents (Jer. 35:7). 6 The plural of kodesh is similarly vocalized with a chataf kamatz

beneath the kof. It is vocalized like the word kodashim in he shall not eat of the holy things (ba-kodashim) (Lev. 22:4). However, when the alef of the Hebrew plural for tents is vocalized with a cholam, the singular is vocalized like goral (lot). 7 Vocalized cholam kamatz. In our verse tents (ohalim) is vocalized with a cholam. Hence its singular cannot be ohel, for the singular of ohalim is ohal (cholam kamatz). I. E.'s point is that the Hebrew word for tent can come in two forms, ohel or ohal. The latter is so even though this form for tent (ohal) is not found in Scripture. 8 If this is so, we would expect to find the form ohal in Scripture. However, it does not appear there. Nevertheless, I.E. insists that what he says is so.

Verse 6

TOGETHER. Yachdav (together) can refer to two (as in our verse) or to many, as in And all the people answered together (yachdav) (Ex. 19:8). This word does not follow the rules of Hebrew grammar. 9 It does not have a yod between the chet and the vav as do all other similar plural forms (Weiser). Yachdav is not synonymous with yachad (together). Yachdav means acting like one person. 10 That is, their individuality is blended, as in And all the people answered together (yachdav) (Ex. 19:8), which means that all the people answered as if they were one person. Yachad implies two people acting at the same time, but each one by himself (Weiser).

Verse 7

[AND THE CANAANITE AND THE PERIZZITE DWELT THEN IN THE LAND.] This is to be understood as its counterpart (Gen. 12:6). 11 That is, I.E.'s comments on And the Canaanite was then in the land (Gen. 12:6) also apply here. It is possible that Perizzi was a son of Canaan and was included in the list of Canaan's sons under a different name. He, like the prophet Samuel's son 12 I Sam. 8:2 states, Now the name of his (Samuel's) first-born was Joel. However, I Chron. 6:13 states, And the sons of Samuel: the first-born Vashni. Thus Samuel's first-born had two names. and grandfather, 13 The name of Samuel's great grandfather is given as Elihu (I Sam. 1:1), Eliab (I Chron. 6:12) and Eliel (I Chron. 6:19). Thus he had three names. All these sources agree that Samuel's grandfather's name was Jeroham. Therefore I.E. must have meant Samuel's great-grandfather rather than his grandfather. Krinsky and Weiser suggest that grandfather is short for great-grandfather. had two names. 14 Gen. 10:15-18 lists the 10 sons of Canaan. The Perizzites are not mentioned. I.E. surmises that he is mentioned under a different name.

Verse 8

Verse 9

THEN I WILL GO TO THE RIGHT. Ve-e'minah (I will go to the right) comes from the same root as yamin (right).
[THEN I WILL GO TO THE LEFT.] The alef of the noun semol (left) is enunciated in the verb ve-asme'ilah (then I will go to the left). Now this alef is missing in the word hasmili (direct thyself to the left) in Go thee one way to the right, or direct thyself to the left (Ezek. 21:21). Thus, we cannnot determine whether the alef is part of the root of semol or not.

Verse 10

THE PLAIN OF THE JORDAN. Kikkar (plain) means an area with plants. The caf is doubled in kikkar. 15 The word for an area with plants being kar, as in Is. 30:23. Our word reads kikkar because the caf is doubled. On the other hand, it is possible that one caf has been dropped in kar nirchav (large pastures) (Is. 30:23). 16 The basic word being kikkar. Similarly bat (apple of) in bat ayin (the apple of the eye) (Ps. 17:8) is short for bavat in bavat eno (the apple of his eye) (Zechariah 2:12). 17 A bet has been dropped in bat, for the full word is bavat, with two bets (Krinsky). Others interpret: "Similarly we do not know whether a bet has been dropped out in bat, or a bet is doubled in bavat " (Weiser, Cherez). The text supports Krinsky.
WELL WATERED. Mashkeh (watered) is masculine; khullah (well) is feminine. 18 If Scripture were consistent the phrase would have read khullah mashkah. A fire not blown by man shall consume him (Job 20:26) 19 Te'okhlehu (shall consume him) is feminine; nuppach (blown) is masculine. Hence Scripture uses both a masculine and feminine word in reference to the same thing (fire). It does the same in our verse with regard to kikkar. is similar.
BEFORE THE LORD DESTROYED SODOM AND GOMORRAH. Shachet (destroyed) is an infinitive in the pi'el. The meaning of li-fene shachet is: before the Lord destroyed.

Verse 11

AND LOT JOURNEYED. From the east, 20 This is I.E.'s translation of va-yissa lot mi-kedem (and Lot journeyed east). According to I.E., Lot journeyed west to Sodom, away from Abraham who was in Beth-el. The problem with I.E.'s interpretation is that Sodom lies east, not west of Beth-el. Because of this difficulty the Midrash homiletically interprets the clause to mean: He removed himself from the ancient one (mi-kedem) of the universe saying, I desire neither Abraham or his God (Bereshit Rabbah 41:7). As to the problem raised by Sodom lying east of Beth-el, Weiser suggests that in order to reach Sodom from Beth-el one had to journey westward first and then eastward. However, this interpretation is forced. M.S. Siegal in his commentary on Genesis suggests that mi-kedem here has the meaning of eastward, or that mi-kedem is short for mi-kedem levet-el ; i.e., Lot journeyed east of Beth-el, where Abram had pitched his tent. As to I.E., he most probably was not aware that Sodom lies east and not west of Beth-el. for Sodom is west of Beth-el.

Verse 12

AND MOVED HIS TENT. Pitched his tent.

Verse 13

NOW THE MEN OF SODOM WERE WICKED. To their fellow man. This is stated in Ezekiel, viz., neither did she (Sodom) strengthen the hand of the poor and needy (Ezek. 16:49).

Verse 14

Verse 15

FOR ALL THE LAND WHICH THOU SEEST, TO THEE WILL I GIVE IT. By word. 21 Abraham did not take actual possession of Canaan. And he shall put them (Israel's sins and transgressions) upon the head of the goat (Lev. 16:21)

is similar. 22 We thus see that the term “give” can be applied to a verbal statement (Weiser).

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

In this chapter Scripture informs us that the terebinths of Mamre are located in Hebron.

Chapter 14

Verse 1

KING OF GOIIM. Goiim like Elam 1 Which is also mentioned in our verse. is the name of a state. Elam must be the name of a state because shushan ha-birah, which means Shushan the palace, was located in it. 2 Dan 8:2 reads: I was in shushan the castle (shushan ha-birah) which is in the province of Elam. We thus see that Elam was the name of the state and Shushan the name of the palace. On the other hand, king of Goiim 3 Goy in Hebrew means a nation. may be rendered as king of nations, Scripture not stating their names. The meaning of the verse is that Tidal was king over nations other than Shinar, Ellasar and Elam.

Verse 2

Verse 3

ALL THESE CAME AS ALLIES. Chaveru (came as allies) is in the kal.
THE VALE OF SIDDIM. Siddim means the same 4 Sid means lime, whitewash or plaster. Hence the valley of Siddim means the valley of plaster. It was so called because of the plaster pits found there. as sid (plaster) in and plaster them with plaster (ba-sid) 5 Spelled sin, yod, dalet. I.E.’s point is that siddim means the same as sid. However, they come from different roots. Sid in Deut. 27:2 comes from the root sin, vav, dalet. Siddim comes from sin, dalet, dalet, which is also the root of the word sad in Job 13:27. Siddim cannot be the plural of sid (Deut. 27:2) because it is spelled without a yod and has a dagesh in its dalet. I.E.’s point is that sad and sid mean the same although they come from different roots (Weiser). (Deut. 27:2) and sad (plaster) in Thou puttest my feet also in the plaster (ba-sad) 6 This is I.E.’s interpretation of the verse. In Job he explains the verse to mean God had plastered Job’s feet with whitewash so that He could follow Job’s every step. I.E. points out that siddim is the plural of sad in Job. The sin and samach interchange. (Job 13:27). Sad, siddim, is like pat (morsel of bread), pittim. 7 We would expect the plural of sad (Job. 13:27) to be saddim. I.E. points out that this is not necessarily so. Thus the plural of pat is pittim and not pattim. Similarly the plural of sad is siddim and not saddim (Krinsky and Cherez).

VALE. The word vale is to be understood as if written twice. It is like the word al (not) in O Lord, rebuke me not (al) in Thine anger; Neither (ve-al) chasten me in Thy wrath (Ps. 6:2). 8 Here, too, the word al is to be read as if written twice. It should be noted that the word al does appear twice in our verse. I.E. probably had Ps. 38:2 in mind. There the text literally reads, O, Lord, rebuke me not (al) in Thine anger, chasten me in Thy wrath. I.E. says that the verse should be read, O Lord rebuke me not (al) in Thine anger, chasten me not (al) in Thy wrath. I.E. probably cited from memory and misquoted. Our verse should be read as follows: All these came as allies unto the vale of Siddim, the same is the vale of the Salt Sea. 9 The text literally reads: the vale of Siddim, the same is the Salt Sea.

Verse 4

[AND IN THE THIRTEENTH YEAR THEY REBELLED.] U-shelosh esreh (and the thirteenth) should be interpreted u-ve-shelosh esreh (and in the thirteenth). 10 The verse literally reads: U-shelosh esreh shanah (and thirteen years). I.E. says, u-shelosh esreh should be read as if a bet were prefixed to shelosh, i.e., u-ve-shelosh esreh. It is similar to the word sheshet (six) in for in six (sheshet) days the Lord made the heaven and earth (Ex. 20:11). 11 The verse literally reads: for six days the Lord made heaven and earth. Thus sheshet is to be read as if written ve-sheshet (in six). However, the author of the Seder Olam did not interpret it this way. He combined the years mentioned in our verse. 12 Cf. Seder Olam I. The Seder Olam interprets u-shelosh esreh shanah to mean, and 13 years; i.e., they rebelled 13 years. It adds these 13 years to the 12 years mentioned previously in our verse and claims that the Bible deals with a 25-year period, 12 of service and 13 years of rebellion. His mind was greater than ours.

Verse 5

THE REPHAIM. They were called Rephaim (ghosts) because their appearance was so terrifying that whoever saw them died and was considered to be one of the Rephaim, one of the dead. 13 Rephaim has the meaning of dead, shades or ghosts. Cf. Is. 14:9. They were called Rephaim because those who saw them were frightened to death. Rephaim were thus considered to be death-inducing.
THE EMIM. They were so called because they were frightening. 14 Emah means fear.

Verse 6

IN THEIR MOUNT SEIR. Be-hareram (in their mount) is in the pi’el. Its meaning is: when they went up to Mount Seir. 15 I.E. explains that be-hareram is not a noun with a pronominal suffix meaning their mountain. He holds that it is a verb with the pronominal suffix. It is like the word be-dabberam (when they spoke) (Ex. 7:7). 16 Which is a pi’el verb with a pronominal suffix.

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

AGAINST CHEDORLAOMER. With Chedorlaomer. 17 The Hebrew has et Chedorlaomer. Et usually indicates the object, hence I.E.'s comment that et here has the meaning of im (with).

Verse 10

PITS. Be'er (pit) in the Bible means a bubbling well. Its (pits) vocalization is exceptional because it is in the construct. 18 With chemar (slime). Be'er is vocalized sheva tzere. In our verse it is vocalized segol, chataf segol. I.E. points out that this is so because the word is in the construct with chemar (slime). In other words, when be'er refers to live wells it is vocalized sheva tzere ; when it refers to pits it is vocalized segol, chataf segol (Krinsky, Netter, Cherez). Or what I.E. means is that the word's vowels change because it is in the construct (Filwarg).
AND THEY FELL THERE. They deliberately fell there, in their desire to escape. 19 That is, they hid themselves. And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face (Num. 16:4) is similar. 20 Moses willingly fell on his face.
FLED TO THE MOUNTAIN. The phrase herah nasu is to be rendered: fled to the mountain. The word herah (to the mountain) is an irregular form. 21 We would expect he-harah (Weiser).

Verse 11

Verse 12

WHO DWELT IN SODOM. Lot was dwelling in Sodom on that day. 22 His tent was usually outside of Sodom, cf. Gen. 13:12 (Weiser). Krinsky suggests that I.E. intends to say that Lot's tent was close to Sodom on that day, or by that day he had become a dweller in Sodom. On the other hand, Filwarg suggests that I.E. is trying to explain why yoshev (dwelt; literally, dwells) is in the present when all the verbs pertaining to this incident are in the past. I.E.'s point is that "dwelling" is to be understood as: was dwelling.

Verse 13

[AND THERE CAME ONE THAT HAD ESCAPED.] Palit (one that had escaped) refers to a Sodomite who escaped and saved himself. Palit in one that had escaped (palit) out of Jerusalem came unto me (Ezek. 33:21) is similar. There is a Midrashic interpretation concerning the escapee. 23 The Midrash identifies the escapee as Og, King of Bashan, the same individual who escaped the flood by hanging on to Noah's ark. Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 42:8.

Verse 14

HE LED FORTH HIS TRAINED MEN. He armed them. 24 Thus va-yarek (he led forth) means he armed. Compare, ve-harek (arm) in, Arm (ve-harek) with the spear (Ps. 35:3). 25 I.E.'s translation of this verse. Others say that va-yarek refers to the unsheathing of the sword. Compare, They empty themselves (yariku) upon the earth (Eccles. 11:3), and emptied (merikim) their sacks (Gen. 42:35). 26 According to this interpretation va-yarek et chanikhav (he led forth his trained men) means, he gave his trained men unsheathed swords (Krinsky). A spear also has a sheath. 27 Hence ve-harek chanit (Ps. 35:3) may be rendered as unsheath the spear.

HIS TRAINED MEN. Abraham had trained them many times for battle. This is the meaning of the term chanikhav (his trained men) even though Scripture does not previously note that Abraham trained young men for war. Those who identify Abraham's trained men with his servant Eliezer on the basis of the numerical value of the latter's name are indulging in Midrash, 28 Interpreted numerically, Eliezer comes to 318. Hence the Midrash identifies him with the 318 men mentioned in our verse. Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 43:2, 44:9. as Scripture does not speak in gematria (numericals). With this type of interpretation one can interpret any name as he wishes, both in a positive and a negative manner. Eliezer is to be taken literally. 29 It is a proper name and not to be interpreted numerically.

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

AND MELCHIZEDEK. He was so called because he was king (melech) over a righteous (tzedek) place. 30 Salem is Jerusalem. Jerusalem is known as the city of righteousness (Is. 1:26). Some identify Melchizedek with Shem. 31 Bereshit Rabbah 56; Nedarim 32b.
SALEM. This is Jerusalem. In Salem also is set His tabernacle, And His dwelling place in Zion (Ps. 76:3) is proof of this.
AND HE WAS PRIEST. This is be rendered as Onkelos does. 32 He ministered. Similarly, every time the word "priest" (kohen) is found in Scripture. 33 It means ministers (Cherez). That they may minister unto Me (ve-khihanu li) (Ex. 28:41) is proof of this. The meaning of al divrati Malkitzedek (after the manner of Melchizedek) (Ps. 110:4) will be found in my commentary on Psalms. 34 Ibn Ezra in Ps. 110:4 explains that God promised David that Israel would wage war and David would receive a tithe of the spoils as Melchizedek did (i.e., after the manner of Melchizedek). Melchizedek spoke properly and did the right thing in first blessing Abraham 35 Before blessing God. because he volunteered to rescue the captives. 36 According to the Talmud Nedarim 32b, Melchizedek acted improperly in blessing Abraham before God and was punished for it by having the priesthood taken away from his descendants. The Talmud derives this from al divrati Melchizedek, which it interprets to mean because of the improper words spoken by Melchizedek. I.E. hints that the latter phrase cannot be explained this way because Melchizedek spoke and acted properly. He then blessed God for aiding Abraham and delivering Abraham's adversaries into his hands.

Verse 19

Verse 20

HATH DELIVERED. Miggen (hath delivered) means handed over. Temaggeneka (will she bestow on thee) in A crown of glory will she bestow on thee (temaggeneka) (Prov. 4:9) is similar. The mem of miggen is a root letter.

Abraham gave a tithe out of respect for God. He found no one worthier than Melchizedek to bestow his tithe on.

Verse 21

Verse 22

I HAVE LIFTED UP MY HAND. This indicates an oath. It is like, For I lift up my hand to heaven, etc. (Deut. 32:40).
[GOD MOST HIGH.] For behold, I have used the same name for God in my oath as this priest (Melchizedek) when he blessed me. 37 Ibn Ezra explains why Abraham referrred to the Lord as God Most High (El Elyon). He did this out of respect for Melchizedek, who used the term El Elyon in referring to God.

Verse 23

THAT I WILL NOT TAKE A THREAD. That with which garments are sewn.
A SHOE-LATCHET. A strap used to tie a shoe.

Verse 24

SAVE ONLY. Save only that which the young men took. This refers to what Abraham's servants ate. 38 Young men thus refers to Abraham's servants (Weiser).

Chapter 15

Verse 1

IN A VISION. A prophetic vision.
[I AM THY SHIELD.] I was your shield and saved you from the kings. I will also reward you because, of your own free will, leading a small force and relying on Me, you saved your nephew.

Verse 2

[CHILDLESS.] The yod of ariri (childless) is like the yod of achzari (cruel). 1 It indicates a state (Weiser). It is not a root letter (Krinsky). The yod is dropped in the plural. Compare, they shall be childless (aririm) 2 The plural is aririm, not aririyyim (Weiser). The point is, even though childless is always written ariri and never arir, the second yod never appears in the plural (Krinsky). (Lev. 20:21). Its meaning is as Onkelos explains it. 3 Onkelos translates ariri as childless.
HE THAT SHALL BE POSSESSOR OF MY HOUSE. Meshek (possessor of) follows the paradigm of meches (levy) (Num. 31:28). It has a root whose second and third letters are identical. It comes from the same root as shokek 4 Its root is shin, kof, kof. (leap) in leap upon it (Is. 33:4). It means the same as the word devek (glue) 5 Meshek is like devek ; both indicate attachment and both are vocalized segol, segol. According to Cherez, I.E. similarly understands shokek in Is. 33:4. In Zephaniah 2:9, I.E. explains ben meshek as one who never leaves the house. and is also vocalized with a segol. 6 It should be noted that Vat. Ebr. 38 omits "with a segol." It reads: it means the same as glue. The word ben is to be read as if written twice. The verse is to read as follows: and he that shall be

possessor of my house (ben meshek beti) is Eliezer, a native of Damascus (ben damesek Eliezer). 7 The verse literally reads: he Damascus Eliezer. I.E. suggests that the word ben be placed before Damascus.

Verse 3

Verse 4

OF THY OWN BOWELS. A euphemism for the sexual organ. Bowels is used as a euphemism because the male member is close to them.

Verse 5

Verse 6

RIGHTEOUSNESS. Compare, And it shall be righteousness unto us (Deut. 6:25). Tzedakah (righteousness) is a synonym for justice. 8 God considered Abraham's action as just and right. However, in Rabbinic literature tzedakah has a different meaning. 9 There it has the meaning of charity.

Verse 7

THAT BROUGHT THEE OUT OF UR OF THE CHALDEES. This verse proves what I have earlier noted, that God's command to Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, etc., was given in Ur of the Chaldees, not in Haran. 10 Cf. I.E.'s comment on Gen. 12:1.
Abraham had complete faith in God's word that he would beget a son who would be his heir. It was only with regard to the possession of the land that he asked for a sign. He acted like Gideon. 11 Cf. Jud. 6:37. Gideon, also, although he had faith in God, asked Him for a sign (Krinsky). Cherez explains that inheriting the land entailed expelling the Canaanites. The latter were expelled because of their sinfulness (v. 16). As there was a possibility that the Canaanites might repent, Abraham asked for a sign that regardless of what the Canaanites might do, his children would inherit the land. Similarly Gideon asked for a sign that he would be victorious even if the Midianites repented. Furthermore, all prophecies are conditional. God's oaths, on the other hand, are unconditional. 12 God's initial word to Abraham was prophetic. Hence it was conditional. Had God sworn an oath, Abraham would not have asked for a sign (Krinsky). Hence Abraham did not sin in requesting that a covenant be made between God and himself. 13 That the land of Canaan be unconditionally given to his descendants. I.E.'s view is in contradistinction to a Midrashic view which held that Abraham sinned in asking for a sign. Cf. Nedarim 32a.

Verse 8

Verse 9

A SHE-GOAT OF THREE YEARS OLD. Some render ez meshuleshet as three she-goats. 14 Onkelos, Rashi. However, it appears to me that the correct translation of the phrase is: a she-goat three years old.

AND A RAM. A full grown male sheep. 15 A ram is a male sheep older than a year (Krinsky).
AND A YOUNG PIGEON. Gozal is a young dove. 16 The word gozal can also be translated as a fledgling. It can thus refer to any bird. Cf. Deut. 32:11. It is to be rendered this way because burnt offerings and other sacrifices were brought only from among the animals and birds mentioned here.

Verse 10

AND DIVIDED THEM IN THE MIDST. He cut them up and separated the pieces. Bater (split) in Upon the split mountains (hare bater) 17 I.E.'s rendering, i.e., mountains that are split or divided by valleys. Cf. Segel's commentary on Canticles. (Cant. 2:17) and betarav (parts of) in between the parts thereof (betarav) (Jer. 34:18) are analogous to va-yevater (and divided them).
AND LAID EACH HALF OVER AGAINST THE OTHER. Note that the word ish (each) 18 Ish usually means a man. However, our verse reads, ish bitro (each half) and deals with animals. Hence I.E. explains that ish does not necessarily mean man. Here it refers to animals. Its meaning is, the half of each animal. means the same as ba'al, which means the thing itself. Similarly, ish (man) in The Lord is a man (ish) of war ; 19 We cannot translate ish milchamah as a man of war, as God is not a man. It must mean: the Lord is a being who wages war (Cherez). (Ex. 15:3); and ish (man) in the man (ve-ha-ish) Gabriel 20 Gabriel is an angel. Therefore the phrase cannot mean the man Gabriel, but rather Gabriel himself. (Dan. 9:21); and ish (fellow) in a base fellow (ish beliyya'al) (II Sam. 20:1). In the latter verse it is in the construct. 21 According to Weiser. This is a most difficult comment. It is hard to understand what I.E. is trying to say. Obviously ish is in the construct with beliyya'al. Cherez writes that he does not understand this comment at all. Filwarg emends ish beliyya'al to ish-ba'al (II Kings 1:8), the point being that we find ish and ba'al in apposition; i.e., ish and ba'al mean the same. Thus ish-ba'al is similar to admat-afar in Dan. 12:2, where admat means the same as afar. Ish is also used in reference to the living creatures seen by Ezekiel, 22 Their wings were joined one (ishah) to another (Ezek. 1:9). and to the curtains of the Tabernacle, viz., Five curtains shall be coupled together one (ishah) to another (Ex. 26:3). The meaning of our clause is that he placed the piece of each one (ish) over against its counterpart. The term ish is to be so interpreted because man and beast are two different beings. 23 Ish must be interpreted as meaning a thing, the very thing. Otherwise it could not refer both to man and beast since they are totally different beings.
BUT THE BIRDS DIVIDED HE NOT. The turtle dove and the young dove. Tzippor (birds) is a general term. 24 Thus tzippor refers both to the turtle dove and to the young dove.

Verse 11

THE BIRDS OF PREY. Ayit (birds of prey) is a type of bird. Ayit (bird of prey) in Is my heritage unto Me as a speckled bird of prey (ha-ayit) (Jer. 12:9) is similar.
UPON THE CARCASSES. On the lifeless bodies. 25 Scripture uses the term pegarim (carcasses) and not betarim (pieces). The reference is to the carcasses of the turtle dove and the young dove (Krinsky).
AND ABRAM DROVE THEM AWAY. Va-yashev (drove away) has a dagesh in the shin to make up for a missing nun. 26 Its root being nun, shin, bet. He drove them and sent them off the carcasses. 27 Them (otom) refers to the birds of prey. It should be noted that ayit (birds of prey) is in the singular. I.E. takes it as a collective noun. Yashev (he caused to blow)

in He causeth His wind to blow (yashev rucho) (Ps. 147:18) is similar. 28 The root nun, shin, bet means to blow. Similarly in our verse Abraham drove the birds off by causing a wind to blow over them, i.e., by flapping at them. On the other hand, he may have flapped at the carcasses to drive the bird of prey off them. 29 According to this interpretation the them refers to the carcasses and ayit refers to one bird. The verse is to be interpreted as follows: the bird of prey came down…and Abraham flapped at the carcasses and drove "it" off.

Verse 12

AND IT CAME TO PASS, THAT, WHEN THE SUN WAS GOING DOWN. This clause indicates that Abraham took him all these (v. 10) during the day after he awoke from his prophetic vision. 30 The vision in which Abraham was told to set aside the animals occurred at night (v. 5). He took the animals on the next day, after awakening from his vision. When the sun came down there transpired what our verse describes (Cherez, Krinsky).

Verse 13

THAT THY SEED SHALL BE A STRANGER IN A LAND THAT IS NOT THEIRS. In Hebrew a person who has a family is likened to a branch attached to its source. Therefore such an individual is called an ezrach, 31 Ex. 12:49. Cf. Lev. 16:29, 18:26, 19:34, 24:16; Num. 9:14. Ps. 37:35 has been rendered in accordance with I.E.'s interpretation in Psalms. Ezrach means native-born. According to I.E. one born in the land is called an ezrach because he is like a branch attached to its tree. It should be added that I.E. points out in his comments on Gen. 2:25 that the Bible compares man to a tree. for the meaning of ezrach is a branch, as in a sprouting tree with many branches (ke-ezrach ra'anan) (Ps. 37:35). On the other hand, a stranger is termed ger in Hebrew from the word gargir (berry), for he is like a berry plucked from a branch. There are some unintelligent people who find this explanation farfetched. However, if they knew the meaning of each letter and its form then they would recognize the truth. 32 Ibn Ezra discusses the meaning and form of letters in his Sefer Ha-Tzachot. He explains that gimel means finished, or weaned (gamal), and resh cut. A poor person is called a rash because he is cut off from his sources. Ger is spelled gimel, resh ; it thus means a person weaned and cut off from his family (Cherez, Netter).
FOUR HUNDRED YEARS. Until the end of this period (four hundred years) starting from this very day. 33 In Ex. 12:40, I.E. writes that the 400 years started with the birth of Isaac. Some versions have "from Isaac's birth" in our text.

Verse 14

WHOM THEY SHALL SERVE. Whose slaves they shall be.

Verse 15

BUT THOU SHALT GO TO THY FATHERS. A euphemism for a natural death.
[IN PEACE.] Unlike your enslaved descendants, you will die in dignity.

Verse 16

AND IN THE FOURTH GENERATION THEY SHALL COME BACK HITHER. Many of the commentaries misunderstood the meaning of the word dor (generation). 34 They explain generations as a specific number of years. Cf. I.E.'s commentary on Job 42:16 in which he notes, Isaac the windbag erred in saying that a generation spans 35 years. In Deut. 7:9 he quotes an

opinion that a generation is 36 years. The sages of the Talmud said there were ten generations from Adam to Noah. 35 Avot 5:2. The sages speak of generations in terms of people, not years. Each one of those mentioned had a life span that differed from the other. Hence dor cannot refer to a fixed number of years. We also find, to a thousand generations 36 If a generation is a fixed number of years then a thousand generations is a thousand times that number. In Deut. 7:9, I.E. argues that it cannot be so. Cf. I.E.'s comments on Deut. 7:9. (Deut. 7:9) and Job speaks of four generations (Job 42:16). 37 In Job the four generations come to 140 years. We thus see that a generation is not a fixed number of years, for each time it is encountered it does not refer to the same number of years. In my opinion the meaning of dor (generation) is dwells. Compare dur (dwell) in Than to dwell (mi-dur) in the tents of wickedness (Ps. 84:11). A generation is measured by a person's life span. Some are long and some are short. Our verse refers to the fourth generation starting from the first that lived as strangers in Egypt. Thus it is written, thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his land (Deut. 23:8). 38 This verse spells out that the Hebrews were strangers in Egypt. And so it was: Kohath, Amram, Moses and Aaron were strangers in Egypt. Their children, who were the fourth generation, returned to the land of Canaan.

FOR THE INIQUITY OF THE AMORITE IS NOT YET FULL. I have explained the meaning of iniquity in my comments on My punishment is greater than I can bear (Gen. 4:13). 39 Iniquity at times means punishment. That is its meaning in this verse; i.e., I have not yet finished punishing them (Cherez). The Amorites are singled out because they were the most powerful of the Canaanite peoples. 40 Actually this verse refers to all the inhabitants of Canaan. Behold, the great kings whom Moses slew were Amorites. 41 Deut. 2:24-36; 4:47. The Bible singles out these kings as being mighty (Weiser). Furthermore, it was five Amorite kings who united to fight Joshua. 42 Josh. 10:5. There are other proofs. 43 In Scripture that the Amorites were the most powerful inhabitants of Canaan. Similarly the prophet says concerning the Amorites, Whose height was like the height of the cedars, And he was strong as the oaks (Am. 2:9). Whoever says that Emori (Amorite) comes from the same root as amar (saying) does not contribute anything. 44 The Midrash interprets the iniquity of the Amorite (avon ha'emori) to mean the sin for saying (avon ha-amirah): O Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it. Pesikta Zutarta, Gen. 15:16.

Verse 17

AND IT CAME TO PASS, THAT WHEN THE SUN WENT DOWN. Until now the sun had not yet set. It is similarly written, when the sun was about to go down (v. 12). 45 This is the literal meaning of va-yehi ha-shemesh la-vo (when the sun was going down). We thus see that what transpired until now took place before the sun went down.

THICK DARKNESS. Alatah (thick darkness) means darkness. The word alatah is also found in Ezekiel (12:6, 7, 12). It means a cloudy night. It might also refer to the darkness that sets in as soon as the last light has disappeared in the clouds.

BEHOLD A SMOKING FURNACE, AND A FLAMING TORCH. An image of a smoking furnace with a flaming torch in it.

BETWEEN THESE PIECES. Ben ha-gezarim means between the pieces. This 46 The passing of the smoking furnace with the flaming torch inside it between the pieces. was the actual taking of the oath. The words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in twain and passed between the parts thereof (Jer. 34:18) is similar. We thus read in the next verse, In that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'Unto thy seed have I given this land,' etc.

Verse 18

FROM THE RIVER OF EGYPT. This refers to the Shihor, and not the Nile. 47 Cf. Josh. 13:3; Jer. 2:18. Josh. 13:3 says that the Shihor lies before Egypt The Nile is in Egypt.

Verse 19

THE KENITE, AND THE KENIZZITE AND THE KADMONITE. These are children of Canaan. Each one had two names. 48 Each one had another name and was listed under the other name in Gen. 10:15-18, in which the children of Canaan are enumerated. See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 13:7.

Verse 20

AND THE REPHAIM. This is what That also is accounted a land of Rephaim (Deut. 2:20) refers to. 49 The point of I.E.'s comment is that Rephaim in our verse refers to the land of Rephaim and not to the Rephaim per se, since the latter were not Canaanites (Weiser). However, Krinsky explains that the Rephaim were a branch of the Canaanites. Do not be surprised that Scripture lists the Canaanite and after him the Jebusite. 50 Canaan was the father of these nations. Why, then, list him between the Kenites and Jebusites (Meijler)? Note: Each one of the seven nations that dwelled in Canaan were Canaanites. They descended from Canaan, who fathered eleven sons. Elsewhere Scripture lists six Canaanite nations by their specific names and includes the remainder under the term Canaanite. 51 Thus Canaan refers to the Canaanite people (Weiser). In our chapter Scripture lists ten of them. 52 Two are included in the name Canaan. At other times Scripture includes them all in the term Canaanite without enumerating them. Scripture similarly states, Judah and Israel were many (I Kings 4:20) even though the term Israel includes Judah. 53 We thus see that the Bible at times is especially explicit. Similarly, although Canaanite can refer to all seven nations, the Bible mentions Canaanite and then notes a number of them.

Chapter 16

Verse 1

Verse 2

IT MAY BE THAT I SHALL BE BUILDED UP. Ibbaneh (I shall be builded up) comes from the same root as ben (son). 1 Hence ibbaneh (I shall be builded up) means I shall have a son. It is possible that the word for son (ben) comes from the root bet, nun, heh (to build), with the heh dropped because, metaphorically speaking, the father serves as the foundation and the son as the building. 2 I.E. comments thusly because the root of ibbaneh is obviously bet, nun, heh. Chai (life) in the third person perfect and in the adjectival form is similar. 3 From the root chet, yod, heh.
AND ABRAM HEARKENED. Abraham said yes to her.

Verse 3

AFTER ABRAM HAD DWELT TEN YEARS IN THE LAND OF CANAAN. Our sages, of blessed memory, transmitted a law that a man shall not remain married more that ten years to a woman who has not borne him a child. They used this verse as sort of a support for this law. It is a good support.

Verse 4

WAS DESPISED. The tzere 4 The letters added to the root to indicate that it is in the imperfect are, with the exception of the first person singular, always vocalized with a chirik in the nifal. I.E. literally reads, the missing yod between the prefix and the root letter. He is referring to the tzere which has a yod sound. in va-tekal (was despised) is in place of the dagesh which should be placed in the kof to make up for one of the missing root letters. 5 A lamed. The root of va-tekal (was despised) being kof, lamed, lamed. This comment is difficult. The tav of va-tekal is in reality vocalized with a tzere to make up for the dagesh that should have been placed in the kof to make up for the missing nun of the nifal form. Filwarg amends I.E. to read so. Va-tekal is a nifal.

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

FOUND HER. Va-yimtza'ah (found her) is irregular. 6 Our verse should have read, va-yimtza'eha. It should have been vocalized like va-yisna'eha (and he hateth her) (Deut. 22:16).

Verse 8

WHENCE. Ay (whence) means where. Ay (where) in Where is (ay) Abel thy brother (Gen. 4:9) is similar. Mi-zeh (from this) 7 J.P.S. translates ai mi-zeh as whence. It literally reads, where (ay) from this (mi-zeh), hence I.E.'s comments. is short for mi-zeh makom (from this place). 8 Weiser. The meaning of ai mi-zeh vat is: where is the place thou camest from?
I FLEE. The resh of borachat (I flee) is vocalized with a pattach because it is followed by a guttural. 9 The second radical of a participle in the feminine is usually vocalized with a segol. Compare, shomeret, kotevet. These are similar: borachat (fleeth) in The whole city fleeth (borachat) (Jer. 4:29); porachat (budding) in and as it was budding (khe-forachat) (Gen. 40:10); rachat (shovel) in with the shovel (va-rachat) and with the fan (Is. 30:24); and yoda'at (known) in that hath known man (yoda'at ish) (Num. 31:17). The reason the middle letter of the root of the above words is vocalized with a pattach is that it precedes gutturals. They are: alef, chet, heh, ayin. This is the rule. There is no exception.

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

BEHOLD THOU. Hinnakh (behold thou) is the form used when a female is being addressed, because it is a preposition. It is like the word im (with); it follows the paradigm of immakh (with you). 10 A word with a second person singular feminine pronominal suffix is usually vocalized with a tzere. Compare, sifrech (your book) or lekhtekh (your going). Thus I.E. points out that prepositional words such as immakh (with you), lakh (to you) and bakh (in you) are vocalized with a kamatz in place of a tzere.
ISHMAEL. The alef of Ishmael is not pronounced to simplify enunciation.

Verse 12

A WILD ASS OF A MAN. He will be free among men. 11 As a wild ass is. No one controls the wild ass or places a burden on him. Similarly Ishmael shall be a free and uncontrolled person. The Hebrew has pereh adam, literally, wild ass-man, hence the different interpretations which follow. Compare, Who hath sent out the wild ass free (Job 39:5). The meaning of our clause is that no stranger will rule over him. 12 Weiser. Others say that we should render perah adam (a wild ass of a man) by a wild ass and a man. 13 That is, a connective vav should be placed before adam (man). He will have the qualities of a wild ass and of a man. It is like The sun and moon stand still in their habitation ((Hab. 3:11). 14 Here, too, a connective vav has to be prefixed to yare'ach (moon). The verse literally reads: the sun moon stand still in their habitation. The meaning of our verse is: because he will be a wild ass his hand shall be against every man, but because he is a man every man's hand (shall be) against him. In my opinion its interpretation is: he will be as a wild ass among men; 15 This opinion, like the first one, renders pereh adam as wild ass among men, but it explains it differently. i.e., he will overcome men. However, ultimately every man's hand (shall be) against him. This is clearly stated in the book of Daniel, for the fourth beast described therein refers to the kingdom of Ishmael. 16 Cf. Dan. 7:7. I.E.'s point is that at first the Ishmaelite kingdom will prevail. However, in the end it will be defeated.
AND HE SHALL DWELL IN THE FACE OF ALL HIS BRETHREN. The latter being the children of Keturah. 17 The woman whom Abraham took after Sarah's death (Gen. 25:1). It is similarly written, over against all his brethren did he settle (Gen. 25:18). Also, the Midianites are of the children of Keturah. However, they are referred to as Ishmaelites in the Pentateuch 18 Gen. 37:25-28. and in the Book of Judges. 19 Jud. 8:22-24.

Verse 13

A GOD OF SEEING. Ro' i (seeing) follows the paradigm of oni (affliction). 20 Ro' i, like oni, is a noun (Krinsky) and both are vocalized with a chataf kamatz beneath the first letter. Compare, I am the man that hath seen affliction (oni) (Lam. 3:1). The meaning of a God of seeing is a God who appears in visions.
HAVE I EVEN HERE. The commentaries translate halom as now. 21 According to Weiser. However, its correct meaning is here. Halom (hither) in Is there yet a man come hither (halom) (I Sam. 10:22) is similar. The meaning ha-gam halom ra'iti achare ro' i (have I even here seen Him that seeth me) is: have I even here seen an angel of God after God saw my affliction, because God constantly seeth me (ro 'i). 22 In other words, did God who always sees me (ro 'i) really see my affliction and send an angel to me in the dessert. The clause literally reads: Have I even here seen after He seeth me. I.E. apparently views our verse as abridged or perhaps in her excitement Hagar did not complete her thoughts.

Verse 14

BEER-LAHAI. Beer lahai means the well of him who will be alive next year. 23 According to Bachya, I.E. explains Beer-lahai-roi as meaning the well (be'er) that he who is alive next year (la-chai) shall see me there (ro 'i). Since the Ishmaelites met yearly at this well, they referred to it by this name. Compare, ko le-chai (so to life next year) (I Sam. 25:6). 24 I.E.'s translation of ko le-chai (Netter). The well was so called because the Ishmaelites held annual festivities at this well. It is still in existence and is called the well of zamum.

Chapter 17

Verse 1

GOD ALMIGHTY. Shaddai is an adjective meaning mighty. Shaddai in like a mighty voice (ke-kol shaddai) 1 Our translation follows that of I.E. Cf. Kimchi on Ezek. 1:24. I.E.'s point is that here, too, Shaddai is an adjective meaning mighty. (Ezek. 1:24) is similar. Also, Shaddai in And mighty will be thy silver 2 I.E. on Job. 22:24, 25 renders betzer by kesef (silver). And mighty will be thy silver means you will have a great amount of money. (shaddai betzarekha) (Job 22:25) is similar because the word betzarekha (thy silver) has the same meaning as the word betzer (silver) in And lay thy treasure (or silver) (betzer) in the dust 3 Hence the verse is to be rendered: And mighty (Shaddai) will be thy silver. Thus Shaddai is an adjective meaning mighty (Job 22:24). The word Shaddai follows the paradigm of davvai (faint), in And my heart is faint (davvai) (Lam. 1:22). Many derive Shaddai from the same root as shoded (overpowering), 4 Brown, Driver and Briggs (Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament) define shoded as: deals violently with, despoils, devastates, ruins. Cf. Jer. 6:26. Thus shoded has the connotation of overpowering. In keeping with the concept of I.E., but more important out of respect to God, we have translated shoded as overpowering. meaning, He is victorious and overpowering. The reason God used this name at this time was to impress upon Abraham the fear of God so that he would circumcise himself. The correct interpretation of the divine names is as follows: Shaddai is an adjective describing God's power over creation. The Tetragrammaton, God's revered and awesome name, stands in contrast to it. The world exists by virtue of these two names. 5 The Tetragrammaton expresses God's essence, His eternality, and His being the cause of all existence. Shaddai emphasizes His power over creation. Thus these two names stand opposite each other; i.e., these names teach that there is an Eternal God who created all (Tetragrammaton) and has the power over all (Shaddai). Furthermore, on a more "practical" level it is via the Tetragrammaton that the world was created, and via the name Shaddai that nature is overcome. Others comment that the Tetragrammaton stands for creation and Shaddai, for destroying or limiting the creation (Krinsky). See I.E.'s comment on Ex. 3:15, 6:3. Whoever understands the secret of God's name will accept my interpretation.
AND BE THOU WHOLE-HEARTED. Do not question the reason for circumcision.

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

ABRAHAM. The new name with the addition of the resh means the mighty one of a multitude of nations. This is so because the new name did not come to diminish a letter from Abraham's original name but to add one. 6 Prima facie there is no meaning for the resh in Abraham. I.E. argues that it does not have a meaning, for the resh is an integral part of the new name. Abraham means avir hamon goyim, for av hamon goyim with the resh added gives avir hamon goyim. I.E. is in contradistinction to Rashi who comments that the resh in Abraham was carried over from Abram and did not signify anything. We have followed Vat. Ebr. 38 in our translation, which reads, Abraham im tosefet ha-resh avir hamon goyim.
Sarah, unlike Sarai, is a general adjective. 7 Sarai connotes my princess; Sarah connotes princess over all (Cherez). Blessed be the Lord before whom all actions are weighed. He commanded Abraham to circumcise himself before Sarah became pregnant so that his seed would be holy. 8 By being the seed of a circumcised father.

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

[EVERY MALE AMONG YOU SHALL BE CIRCUMCISED.] Himmol (shall be circumcised) is to be read as if it had a lamed prefixed to it. It is an infinitive. 9 Hence it means shall be circumcised. Himmol might be taken to be an imperative, hence I.E.'s comment. It belongs to the verbs having a vav as the middle letter of their root. 10 It is an ayin, vav, its root being mem, vav, lamed. It is like va-yamal 11 Whose root is also mem, vav, lamed. in and circumcised (va-yamal) the flesh of their foreskin (v. 23). It follows the paradigm of le-hikkon (to be prepared). 12 Cf. Ez. 38:7; Amos 4:12. The root of le-hikkon is caf, vav, nun. Le-himmol is the same form as le-hikkon. Both le-himmol and le-hikkon are nifal infinitives.

Verse 11

AND YE SHALL BE CIRCUMCISED. U-nemaltem (and ye shall be circumcised) is similar to u-shemartem (and ye shall keep). 13 U-shemartem is a kal. Similarly u-nemaltem (and ye shall be circumcised) is a kal, meaning: and ye shall circumcise. The nun of u-nemaltem is a root letter. 14 Its root

is nun, mem, lamed. There are thus two roots meaning to circumcise, viz., nun, mem, lamed and mem, vav, lamed. (See I.E.'s comments on verse 10 and note 10). Yadon (shall be sheathed) in My spirit shall not be sheathed (yadon) (Gen. 6:3) and nidneh (sheath) (Dan. 7:15) are similar. 15 There are two roots for the Hebrew word for sheath, viz., nun, dalet, nun, nidneh (Dan. 7:15) and dalet, vav, nun, yadon (Gen. 6:3). (Rendering Gen. 6:3 according to I.E. See I.E. on Gen. 6:3).

Verse 12

SHALL BE CIRCUMCISED AMONG YOU. Yimmol (shall be circumcised) is a nifal, as are himmol yimmol (must needs be circumcised) (v. 13). Why does Scripture state twice, He that is born in thy house…must needs be circumcised? 16 Verse 13 seems to repeat what is in verse 12. I.E. asks why. This is the answer: Scripture first states that in the future all males, those of thy seed and also those born in the house or bought with money, shall be circumcised on the eighth day. It then states, " Abraham immediately circumcise all males born in thy house and he that is bought with thy money although they are adults." 17 It might have been thought that since the command speaks of circumcision on the eighth day, those past that age when the command was given were exempt. Thus verse 12 speaks of the future and verse 13 of the present. Thus there is no repetition.

Verse 13

Verse 14

AND THE UNCIRCUMCISED MALE WHO IS NOT CIRCUMCISED. Yimmol (is circumcised) is a kal. It is like yiddor (voweth) in When a man voweth (yiddor) a vow (Num. 30:3). It comes from the same root as u-nemaltem (and ye shall be circumcised) in and ye shall be circumcised (u-nemaltem) in the flesh of your foreskin (v. 11). 18 J.P.S. renders both yimmol and u-nemaltem as nifals. I.E. renders them as kals, as actives whose root is nun, mem, lamed.. Our verse should thus be rendered: And the uncircumcised male who does not circumcise the flesh of his foreskin. The meaning of the verse is, a male who reaches the age when he is obligated to observe the commandments of the Torah and does not circumcise himself is subject to the penalty of karet (being cut off). The verse refers to an adult because while a person is yet a child, the obligation to circumcise him falls upon his father. However, should his father fail to do so, then upon reaching maturity he must circumcise himself. Karet (being cut off) is a penalty inflicted by God. Those who err hold that a child that dies uncircumcised does not have a share in the world to come. 19 It is for this reason that Jews customarily circumcise, prior to burial, a child who dies uncircumcised. Cf. Shulchan Arukh Yoreh Deah 263:5. It is clear from I.E.'s refutation of the belief that an uncircumcised child does not have a share in the world to come that those who held this view based it on the verse: And the uncircumcised male…that soul (nefesh) shall be cut off from his people (v. 14). They interpreted nefesh as soul and cut off as referring to the world to come (Weiser). However, the meaning of the word nefesh is not as they think, a soul 20 They translated nefesh as soul., but a person; it means a body containing a soul. Similarly, If anyone (nefesh) shall sin (Lev. 4:2). Some say that karet refers to death before the age of fifty-two. Others say it means the eradication of one's name via the death of one's children. Therefore Scripture states, that soul shall be cut off from his people, for a

person who leaves children is considered to live on even after his death, and his name is not cut off.

Verse 15

Verse 16

AND MOREOVER I WILL GIVE THEE. Natati (I will give thee) in our verse is like natati in I will give (natati) the price of the field (Gen. 23:13). Observe, although both are perfects, they are to be rendered as imperfects.

Verse 17

SHALL A CHILD BE BORN UNTO HIM THAT IS A HUNDRED YEARS OLD. Abraham was amazed at being told that he would have a son because the sperm of an old man is cold 21 Medieval medicine believed in four humors. and therefore aged men are infertile. However, he was even more amazed that Sarah, a woman whose menstrual cycle had ceased, would bear a child, since the embryo is made and constructed from the woman's menstrual blood. If you will reflect you will conclude that Sarah's conceiving was a greater wonder than Abraham's begetting a child. For we find instances of men over ninety begetting children in later generations, 22 However, we do not find in Scripture any report of an aged woman bearing a child. Vat. Ebr. 38 reads, "We find that King David's forefathers each sired a son when over 90." Cf. I.E.'s comment on Ruth 4:17. and the life span of people in Abraham's time was much longer than in later times. 23 Since men of later generations whose life spans were shorter than that of Abraham sired children when over 90, it diminishes the uniqueness of Abraham's experience. Vat. Ebr. 38 reads, "The life span of people in Abraham's generation was longer than that of David's generation." As soon as the angel left, Abraham immediately circumcised Ishmael and all those born in his house and those bought with money.

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

IN THE SELFSAME DAY. Abraham did not hesitate to carry out the commandment of circumcision. Behold, Abraham's household consisted of three hundred eighteen males born in his house 24 Cf. Gen. 14:15. aside from those bought with his money. After circumcising them, Abraham circumcised himself on that very day. 25 The Bible states, And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money…and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day (v. 23). After stating this, Scripture notes, And Abraham was ninety years old and nine when he was circumcised (v. 24). Thus Abraham was circumcised last. Now Ishmael his son plus all those born in his house and bought with his money were voluntarily circumcised with him (Abraham) (v. 27). For the meaning of "with him" (v. 27) is that Abraham did not have to force his household to comply with God's commandment. They all voluntarily hurried to do and fulfill God's will.

Verse 27

WERE CIRCUMCISED WITH HIM. Nimmolu (were circumcised) is a nifal. Its root is nun, mem, lamed. 26 Hence there is a dagesh in the mem of nimmolu to make up for the missing nun of the root. The nun of nimmolu is the nun of the nifal. Ve-nishlo'ach (were sent) in And letters were sent (ve-nishlo'ach sefarim) (Est. 3:13) is similar. 27 The cholam in nimmolu presents a problem. When a letter having a nun as the first letter of its root is conjugated in the nifal as a shelamim it is not vocalized with a cholam (Weiser). I.E. thus points out that we find the same with nishlo'ach. Nishlo'ach is a shelemim nifal and it, too, is vocalized with a cholam, i.e., nishlo'ach rather than nishlach (Filwarg).

Chapter 18

Verse 1

AND THE LORD APPEARED. Behold, a few say that God is three men: He is one and He is three and they are inseparable. 1 This comment of I.E. is cryptic. Krinsky sees in it an allusion to the Christian doctrine of trinity. According to him, a few say refers to the Christians. Filwarg disagrees. He insists that I.E. is merely saying that God's revelation took the form of three angels appearing to Abraham. One can argue on behalf of Krinsky that the Christians did use this verse as "proof" of their doctrine of trinity. And indeed, I.E.'s language seems to support Krinsky. On the other hand, would I.E. refer to the Christians as a few say, thereby giving some credence to their trinitarian interpretation? Furthermore, Rashbam accepts this interpretation minus, of course, its trinitarian aspects. Commenting on this verse, Rashbam says, And the Lord appeared to him. How? Three men who were angels came to him. Thus Rashbam interprets this verse in a way similar to the phrase a few say quoted by I.E. Hence a few say may very well refer to a Jewish interpretation. However, it should be noted that Saadiah Gaon, in rejecting the doctrine

of trinity, writes, “Others (finally) conjecturing about the implication of the passage, And the Lord appeared unto him by the terebinths of Mamre (Gen. 18:1), declare that the thing that appeared to Abraham and was designated by this name was a trinity because Scripture later on explicitly states: And, lo, three men stood over against him (Gen. 18:2). Let me explain, then, that these are more ignorant (than the opinions concerning God’s essence previously refuted) because they did not wait until they reached the end of the passage. For had they had patience until they heard the verse: And the men turned from thence, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before the Lord (Gen. 18:22), they would have realized that the men had departed while the light of God remained stationary with Abraham, who was in its presence. The thought therefore that God was identical with these men is completely refuted” (The Book of Beliefs and Opinions, Rosenblat translation, p. 108). Reading Ibn Ezra’s comments side by side with that of Saadiah seems to leave no doubt that both deal with the same group, the Christians. Indeed, it seems that Saadiah was the source of I.E.’s comments. They forget that Scripture expressly states, And the two angels came to Sodom at even. 2 Gen. 19:1. This verse clearly shows that the three are separable and thus cannot refer to God. The few say state that the three are inseparable. However, the commentaries tell us 3 Perhaps the term mefareshim (commentators) is used to indicate that what they say is acceptable in contrast to the first ones quoted who are not even deemed Biblical commentators. See preceding notes. that God first appeared to Abraham in a vision after which Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw three angels. 4 Cf. Rashi. One came to bring happy tidings to Sarah 5 That she would have a son. and the other two went on to Sodom, one to destroy it and one to save Lot.
The meaning of And they did eat 6 Angels do not eat. (v. 8) is that the bread was consumed. 7 The angels caused the bread to be consumed. Thus it appeared to have been eaten. Eaten, in our verse, has the same meaning as the identical word in whereto the fire hath eaten (consumed) (Lev. 6:3).

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

[FORASMUCH AS YE ARE COME.] Ki al ken avartem (forasmuch as ye are come) means the same as ho’il va-avartem (since you are come) in Rabbinic Hebrew. 8 In other words, ki al ken means the same as the Rabbinic term ho’il (since). The Hebrew ki al ken can also be explained to mean, for this reason; i.e., the verse can be read: I will fetch a morsal of bread and stay your heart…for this reason (to eat) are ye come to your servant (Netter), hence I.E.’s comment. It is like forasmuch as (ki al ken) as they are come under the shadow of my roof (Gen. 19:8).
SO DO, AS THOU HAST SAID. They responded politely and said to him that a morsel of bread would suffice. 9 We would expect them to say: We will do as thou hast said, rather than So do, hence I.E.’s comment.

Verse 6

KNEAD IT. Lushi (knead it) is like va-talash (and kneaded it) (I Sam. 28:24). 10 That is, lushi means to knead, as in I Sam. 28:24. Since the root lamed, vav, shin is not often found in Scripture, I.E. quotes an additional verse to illustrate its meaning (Filwarg). Cherez explains that since lushi is a transitive verb we would expect to find the object "dough," i.e., knead the dough, as in and the women knead the dough (Jer. 7:18). Hence I.E. points out that occasionally the word dough is left out, as in I Sam. 28:24.

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

WHEN THE SEASON COMETH ROUND. Ka-et (when the season) means next year, at this time, and chayyah (cometh round), that Sarah will then be alive. 11 Ka'et chayyah is not to be rendered as J.P.S. does, but rather, next year at this season and Sarah will then be alive (Weiser, Netter). It is like ko le-chai (so to life next year) (I Sam. 25:6). 12 See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 16:14 and the notes to it.
WHICH WAS BEHIND HIM. 13 The verse reads, ve-hu acharav, which is rendered by I.E.: and he (the angel) was behind it (the tent). The angel who spoke to Abraham was behind the tent. Abraham sat in the tent door and consequently could not see Sarah. Others say that the door of Sarah's tent was behind the tent of Abraham. 14 According to this interpretation ve-hu is to be rendered: and it. The "it" (ve-hu) refers to the door of Sarah's tent. The verse thus reads: and it (the door of Sarah's tent) was behind it (Abraham's tent) (Cherez).

Verse 11

AND WELL STRICKEN IN AGE. They lived many days. 15 The verse literally reads: coming into the days.

Verse 12

SHALL I HAVE. Hayetah li means shall I have. 16 Hayetah li literally means I had. I.E. explains that hayetah is to be taken as an imperfect even though it is a perfect.
PLEASURE. The word ednah means pleasure and enjoyment. Va-yitaddenu (and luxuriated) in and luxuriated (va-yitaddenu) in Thy great goodness (Neh. 9:25) is similar. The meaning of our verse is: How can the enjoyment and pleasure of youth be renewed in me, seeing that I have waxed old and aged and my husband, too, is old.
[WITHIN HERSELF.] In her mind. God revealed Sarah's inner thoughts to the angel.

Verse 13

WHOM AM OLD. This explains After I am waxed old. 17 Sarah said, achare viloti (after I am waxed old). The angel quoted her as saying, ani zakanti (I who am old). I.E. points out that zakanti means the same as viloti. The angel spoke the truth. 18 See Baba Metzia 87a and Yebamot 65b, which state that Scripture changed Sarah's actual words for the sake of peace so that Abraham would not take offense. They interpret ani zakanti (I whom am old) as referring to Sarah's statement of va-adoni zaken (my lord being old also). I.E. disagrees with this interpretation (see note 17).
The mem of umnam (of a surety) is not a root letter. It is like the mem of shilshom (the day before yesterday) (Gen. 31:5). Other commentators maintain that Abraham's three guests were prophets. If one should argue, why would God send a message via a prophet to Abraham who himself was a prophet, 19 God could have revealed his prophecy to Abraham directly, as he did to the three prophets who visited him. What need was there to send a prophet to him? since it is only when one prophet is greater than the other, as in the case of Moses who was sent with a prophesy to Aaron, 20 Cf. Ex. 4:14-16, 28. that God transmits his intentions to a prophet through another prophet, 21 Abraham was obviously the greatest prophet in his generation. then they would answer that the three prophets came not to Abraham but to Sarah. Indeed, Scripture explicitly states, And they said unto him: Where is Sarah thy wife (v. 9). 22 This indicates that the message was for Sarah. After one of the prophets delivered the message to Sarah, the other two went on to Sodom. Also, do not be troubled by the clause for we will destroy this place (Gen.19:13), 23 A prophet cannot destroy a city. An angel can. Therefore, this clause implies that they were angels. as we find a similar expression with regard to Moses and Aaron: And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh (Ex. 11:10). In reality God did the wonders and they were attributed to Moses and Aaron because they were the agents by which the miracles were performed. Now according to this interpretation, and they did eat (v. 8) is to be taken literally. Similarly, according to this interpretation, the term Adonai (Lord) in My lord, (Adonai) if now I have found favor in thy sight (v. 3) does not refer to the Deity, but means my lords. Hence there is a pattach beneath the nun, and it is not vocalized with a kamatz as would be the case if it referred to God. 24 Adonai with a pattach means my lords; with a kamatz, it means Lord. However, in those copies of the Pentateuch where Adonai is vocalized with a kamatz the term must be interpreted as: O prophet of God. 25 In our copies of the Pentateuch, Adonai is vocalized with a kamatz. Also (according to the aforementioned interpretation), the reason Abraham said, if now I have found favor in thy sight (v. 3) 26 If Abraham addressed three prophets why did he employ the singular be-enekha? He should have used the plural be-enekhem. is that he first addressed the most important of the three and then the other two. 27 Krinsky. He then said the same to each one of the others. Those who maintain that the three who visited Abraham were prophets 28 Gen. 19:1 refers to them as angels and so must be explained. point out that the prophet Haggai is referred to in Scripture as an angel. 29 Haggai 1:13. Others say that Adonai means Lord and that Abraham respectfully requested that God wait until he had attended his guests. There are still others who say that the verses are not in order of their occurrence. 30 I.e., Abraham first saw the angels (v. 2-16) and then God appeared to him (v. 1). According to this interpretation the Bible introduces the chapter with a statement that God appeared to Abraham. It then tells us that before God appeared to Abraham angels visited him. Scipture then records what God told Abraham when He appeared to him (v. 17-21). According to the earlier interpretation God first appeared to Abraham and then Abraham saw the angels. According to this interpretation, And he lifted up (v. 2) is to be interpreted: and he had already lifted up his eyes and looked and done so and so. After this, God

appeared to him and said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I am doing, etc. (v. 17), and Verily the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, etc. (v. 20). But Abraham stood yet before the Lord (v. 22) when the two angels who left for Sodom arrived there. In any case, 31 Whichever of the above interpretations we adopt. And the Lord said: Shall I hide from Abraham that which I am doing, etc., relates either to what God directly revealed to Abraham or to what He told the angels to relate to Abraham. However, all opinions agree that And the Lord said: Verily the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and verily their sin is exceedingly grievous, etc. (v. 20 and 21), definitely records God's words to Abraham. Upon hearing this, Abraham drew near and said, Wilt thou indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked, etc. (v. 23-32). And the men turned from thence, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before the Lord, (v. 22) is a parenthetical statement noting that at the very moment that the men came to Sodom, God told Abraham, Verily, the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great. This is similar: As they were going down at the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul: 'Bid the servant pass on before us - and he passed on - but stand thou still at this time, that I may cause thee to hear the word of God' (I Sam. 9:27). 32 And he passed on is a parenthetical statement. I.E. points out that such statements are found in the Bible. Similarly verse 22 is parenthetical. There is no need to assume that the scribes changed the original reading of our verse 33 According to the Midrash verse 22 originally read: But the Lord yet stood before Abraham. However, out of respect for God the Scribes reversed the passage to read: But Abraham stood yet before the Lord. Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 49:7; Va-yikra Rabbah 11:5. For the reason that the Midrash assumed the verse originally read: but the Lord yet stood before Abraham; see Rashi and Krinsky. I.E. claims that there never was, in fact, any scribal emendation, as the literal meaning of the text does not support such an assumption (Filwarg). from but the Lord stood yet before Abraham to but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. Indeed, the verse And Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord (Gen. 19:27) proves that there was no scribal emendation. 34 This verse clearly states that it was Abraham who stood before the Lord. I will allude to my own beliefs with regard to the appearance of the angels in my commentary on the first Torah portion of Exodus. 35 Following Krinsky. Cf. I.E.'s short commentary on Ex. 3:15.

Verse 14

[IS ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR THE LORD?] Ha-yippale (is it too hard) means is it hidden. 36 According to this interpretation, ha-yippale me-adonai davar (is anything too hard for the Lord) means is anything hidden from God. Cf. Rashi, "is anything too hidden…or concealed from me, that I cannot do it." Fele (hidden things) in oseh fele (doing hidden things) (Ex. 15:11) 37 The manner in which God works miracles is hidden to man. is similar. Others say the meaning of ha-yippale me-adonai davar is: it is not a wonder in God's eyes to do such a thing. 38 They interpret ha-yippale me-adonai davar to mean: is anything wondrous from God? However, if this were so, then a mem would not be prefixed to God's name. 39 The text reads, ha-yippale me-adonai davar. Me-adonai means from God, and cannot imply, in God's eyes. Otherwise Scripture would have written, la-adonai, meaning: is anything wondrous to the Lord? "Wondrous from" is not used in Hebrew. Therefore the correct meaning of our phrase is: is anything hidden from the Lord?

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

SHALL BE BLESSED IN HIM. Ve-nivrikhu (shall be blessed) is a nifal. It means that they shall be blessed because of Abraham. However, ve-hitbarekhu (Gen. 22:18) has a different meaning. It means: they shall bless themselves in him. 40 They shall bless themselves by invoking his name. That is, all the nations of the earth shall pray that they, too, be blessed as Abraham's seed (Krinsky, Netter).

Verse 19

Verse 20

[VERILY THE CRY OF SODOM.] Either the cry of its blasphemy or the cry of those victimized by its violence.
AND, VERILY, THEIR SIN IS EXCEEDINGLY GRIEVOUS. And the earth cannot bear it.

Verse 21

[I WILL GO DOWN NOW, AND SEE WHETHER THEY HAVE DONE ALTOGETHER ACCORDING TO THE CRY OF IT.] Some say this verse is to be interpreted as follows: If they have done so then I will destroy them (kalah). 41 According to this interpretation kalah (altogether) means destruction. If they have done so is I.E.'s paraphrase of whether they have done according to the cry of it, which is come unto me.
AND IF NOT, I WILL KNOW. Eda'ah means I will have pity upon them. They similarly interpret va-yeda Elohim (and God took cognizance of them) 42 That va-yeda Elohim means God pitied them. (Ex. 2:25). However, I believe that this verse is to be explained as follows: I will go down and see if all of them (kalah) have done this evil. 43 According to I.E. kalah (altogether) is to be rendered as all, as in Ex. 11:1 (Krinsky). Have done this evil is a paraphrase of according to the cry of it, which is come unto me. For in truth, 44 The reason that Scripture relates that God went down to see if they all did according to the cry that came before him. God who is All knows the individual in a general rather than in a detailed manner. 45 Ibn Ezra seems to be saying that "Ordinarily…God does not know the particular individual as such. He knows him only as implied in the whole" (Husik, p. 193). Thus it was necessary for God to go down and see. Nachmanides criticized Ibn Ezra on this point for introducing alien philosophical concepts into Judaism. Cf. Nachmanides' commentary on the Pentateuch, on this verse. Other commentaries could not accept the literal implication of Ibn Ezra's words and harmonized his comments to conform to traditional thinking. See Krinsky. Some argue that this comment did not come from I.E.'s hand but was inserted in the text by a misguided student. Proof that this interpretation is correct, although it is a great mystery, is Abraham's plea, Wilt thou indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked (v. 23). 46 Abraham asked God not to judge Sodom by his general knowledge but to look upon each of the city's inhabitants as an individual. The heh of ha'af (wilt) is vocalized with a

pattach 47 An interrogative heh is vocalized with a chataf pattach. even though it is an interrogative heh, because it is followed by an alef, which is a guttural, and it is the rule in Hebrew to elongate the vowel before gutturals. 48 Hence an interrogative heh preceding the gutturals alef, heh, chet, ayin is vocalized with a pattach, rather than with a chataf pattach. When the preceding letters are vocalized with a long kamatz, the interrogative is vocalized with a segol.

Verse 22

Verse 23

THAT WILT SWEEP AWAY. Tispeh (thou wilt sweep away) is a transitive verb. It means is thou wilt destroy (or finish). Aspeh (finish) in I will finish (aspeh) evils upon them (Deut. 32:23) is similar. 49 I will spend (finish) all evil upon them. That is, there will be no further evil left to bring upon them. Cf. I.E. on Deut. 32:23 (translated according to I.E.). Both words (tispeh and aspeh) mean the same thing even though they belong to different conjugations. 50 Tispeh is a kal, aspeh a hifil.

Verse 24

AND NOT FORGIVE THE PLACE. Tissa means forgive. Compare, nose (forgiving) in forgiving iniquity (nose avon) (Ex. 34:7).
[THE PLACE.] Sodom. For it was on account of Sodom that Abraham approached God in prayer. He did so to save Lot. 51 I.E. takes issue with those who maintain that Abraham pleaded for the other cities as well. Cf. Targum Jonathan and Rashi.

Verse 25

THAT BE FAR. Chalilah (that be far) means it is not possible. Others say that chalilah (that be far) is to be connected to the word chalul, which means empty. 52 The first explanation interprets chalilah in context. The second connects it to the word chalul (Weiser).
THAT SO THE RIGHTEOUS SHOULD BE AS THE WICKED. When two cafs are prefixed to two words following each other 53 Our verse reads, ve-haya kha-tzadik ka-rasha : that so the righteous should be as the wicked. we are dealing with an abridged statement. Hence our verse should be understood as follows: that so the righteous should be as the wicked and the wicked be so as the righteous. Similarly, for thou art even as Pharaoh 54 Ki kha-mokha ke-faroh is to be understood as if written: for thou art even as Pharaoh, and Pharaoh is even as thou. (Gen. 44:18); my people as thy people (I Kings 22:4); 55 Ke-ammi khe-ammekha, which should be understood: my people as thy people, thy people as my people. and The darkness is even as the light (Ps. 139:12). 56 Ka-chashekhah ka-orah : And the darkness is even as the light, and the light even as the darkness. The thrust of Abraham’s appeal is: How is it possible for the Judge of all the earth to act unjustly?

Verse 26

[WITHIN THE CITY.] That is, who publicly 57 Fifty righteous within the city means 50 people who are publicly righteous. revere My name. Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, And see now, and know, And seek in the broad places thereof, If ye can find a man, If there be any that doeth justly, and seeketh truth; And I will pardon her (Jer. 5:1) is similar.

Verse 27

[I HAVE TAKEN UPON ME.] Ho'alti (I have taken upon me) does not mean I began; it means I wanted. Ho'il Moshe (took Moses upon him) (Deut. 1:5) is similar. The caf of anokhi (I) is superfluous. 58 Anokhi, meaning I, is a variant of ani. J.P.S. renders va-anokhi (literally, and I) as who am. On the other hand, it is possible that there are two different words for I in Hebrew. 59 Ani and anokhi, and the two are not related.
[WHO AM BUT DUST AND ASHES.] For dust I was and ashes I will be. Abraham was speaking only about the body's foundation, i.e., its skeletal frame. 60 Man's spirit does not turn to ashes (Weiser). Hence I.E. explains that dust and ashes refer to man's bones, which are made out of earth (Krinsky). Cf. I.E.'s comment on Gen. 3:18.

Verse 28

PERADVENTURE THERE SHALL LACK FIVE. Perhaps a tenth of the number will be lacking.
[WILT THOU DESTROY ALL THE CITY FOR LACK OF FIVE.] Will you destroy the city because of the five who are missing from the fifty? 61 The bet of ba-chamishah means because, i.e., because of five. I.E. makes this comment because bet usually means in. Abraham then repeated his request and said, "Will you destroy the city if a ninth are missing from the number (forty-five) concerning which you stated that if there be found there that many righteous men I will not destroy them." 62 That is, if there are 40 righteous people in Sodom.

Verse 29

[I WILL NOT DO IT FOR THE FORTY'S SAKE.] I will not do it 63 The text literally reads: I will not do for the sake of the 40. I.E. interprets it as: I will not do a destruction; i.e., I will not bring destruction. Cherez explains, God says, I will not destroy, and at other times, I will not do. I.E. points out that they mean the same thing. means I will not bring destruction. And so as not to prolong his prayers Abraham combined the two previous subtractions. 64 That is, from 50 to 45, from 45 to 40. Then Abraham asked if the Lord would destroy the city if 10 were missing from the number to which God had acceded. He no longer asked concerning five. Thus Abraham asked if one quarter of the forty was missing would God destroy the city. He then asked if a third of the thirty were missing, would God destroy it. He concluded by asking if God would destroy the city if half of the twenty righteous men were missing. Some say that Abraham did not ask God to spare for less than ten people because there were five cities and thus less than two righteous per city. However, they are mistaken, for Scripture expressly tells us that Abraham spoke only of Sodom. 65 According to Cherez and Krinsky. Cf. I.E.'s comment on verse 24. Perhaps we should render for God only promised with regard to Sodom as: If I find in Sodom, etc. (v. 26). Thus only the men of Sodom are to be counted in the total. Now even though our sages, of blessed memory, transmitted as mere tradition the law that there can be no public prayer when fewer than ten men are present, 66 Cf. Berakhot 7b, 47b; Megillah 21b. this verse may be taken as a support of our faith in the law which they passed on to us. 67 I.E.'s point is that the rabbis could have used this verse as a support for the halakhah concerning the necessity of 10 men for public prayer.

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

AND ABRAHAM RETURNED UNTO HIS PLACE. To Hebron. This vision took place at the spot where Abraham went to accompany the angels on their way. 68 I.E. accepts the opinion that God revealed himself to Abraham after he sent the angels on their way (cf. I.E.'s comments on v. 13). This vision took place on the day prior to Sodom's destruction. After Abraham finished pleading for Sodom he returned to Hebron (Cherez). From this spot Abraham looked out toward Sodom. And he (Abraham) looked out toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace (Gen. 19:28) took place after sunrise. This is so even though the preceding verse opens with And Abraham got up early in the morning. 69 Which implies that Abraham looked upon Sodom before sunrise. See I.E. on Gen. 1:18 where he explains that morning comes before sunrise. This is so because Sodom was not destroyed at night. The latter is clearly noted in Scripture. 70 Gen. 19:23,24. Ibn Ezra implies that Abraham got up early in the morning to go to the place from which he could see Sodom. By the time he got there the sun had already risen and Sodom was destroyed (Weiser).

Chapter 19

Verse 1

[AT EVEN.] The term ba-erev (at even) will be explained in the chapter dealing with the Passover observed by the Israelites in Egypt. 1 See I.E.'s comment on Ex. 12:6.
AND HE FELL DOWN ON HIS FACE TO THE EARTH. Until his nose touched the earth. Appayim (his face) refers to the nostrils which protrude from the face. 2 Af means a nostril; hence appayim (his face) means nostrils or nose. I.E. renders and he fell down on his face to the earth as: and he fell down on his nostrils to the earth.

Verse 2

BEHOLD NOW, MY LORDS. Adonai is to be rendered my lords. It does not refer to God. 3 It is vocalized with a pattach beneath the nun. See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 18:13. When the word sur (turn aside) is followed by a mem it means to turn away from. 4 See sur mera (turn aside from evil) (Ps. 34:15). When it is followed by the word el 5 Either el itself or el plus a pronominal suffix. Cf. Krinsky. We have translated according to Vat. Ebr. 38. The printed editions read alef with a pattach. The meaning is the same. (to) it means turn from your place and come here, or turn from your place and go to a designated place. Compare, surah elai (turn in to me) (Jud. 4:18).
AND THEY SAID: "NAY." Unless you urge us to do so. 6 That is why Lot did not take their refusal as final. According to Krinsky, I.E. was bothered by the angels apparently changing their mind. Thus I.E. interpreted that the tone of their voices indicated that, if pleaded with, they would

change their minds (Weiser). The word va-yiftzar (and he urged) indicates the use of many conciliatory words. Haftzar (stubbornness) in And stubbornness (haftzar) is as idolatry and teraphim (I Sam. 15:23) 7 Which I.E. renders: pleading with God to change a prohibition is like idolatry and teraphim (Weiser). is similar.

Verse 3

Verse 4

COMPASSED. Nasabbu (compassed) is a nifal.
ALL THE PEOPLE FROM EVERY QUARTER. Those who did not live in the vicinity of Lot's house.

Verse 5

THAT WE MAY KNOW THEM. A euphemism for sexual intercourse.

Verse 6

TO THE DOOR. Ha-petchah means to the door. 8 The heh at the end of the word petach means to. The tav of the word delet (door) is the sign of the feminine. 9 It is not a root letter. The word delet is also found spelled without the tav. 10 Keep watch at the door (dal) of my lips in Ps. 141:3.

Verse 7

Verse 8

KNOWN MAN. The third person plural perfect is the same in both the masculine and feminine when not written with a vav conversive which is vocalized with a pattach. 11 In other words, yade'u (have known) is used both for the masculine and the feminine. However, when have known is written with a vav conversive, which is vocalized with a pattach, then the masculine and feminine have different forms. The masculine in this case is va-yede'u and the feminine va-tedanah.
THESE. Ha-el (these) means the same as ha-eleh. 12 Ha-eleh is the usual term for these. Saadiah Gaon claims that Scripture used the term ha-el because one of the three angels was missing. 13 According to Saadiah, had all three angels been present then Lot would have said ha-eleh. However, his comment is far-fetched, for the Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch renders both ha-el and ha-eleh by the same word. 14 Onkelos renders both ha-el and ha-eleh by ha-illen. If they had different nuances Onkelos would have used a different word for each.

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

WITH BLINDNESS. Sanverim (blindness) has a quadriliteral root. This term is also found in the account of Elisha (II Kings 6:18). It refers to physical and intellectual blindness. 15 Netter. Had they only been blind they still could have found the door.

Verse 12

HAST THOU HERE ANY BESIDES? SON-IN-LAW. If you have a son-in-law here. 16 The angel was not asking a question; he was making a statment: "If you have a son-in-law here…take him out" (Krinsky).
AND THY SONS, AND THY DAUGHTERS. Or sons-in-law who are considered as your sons and daughters. 17 Lot had no sons (Krinsky). The words "or sons-in-law" have to be supplied by the reader. It is implied in the text. The vav, usually translated as and, here is to be rendered as as (vav ha-dimuy). Cf. Weiser.(We have here a refutation of the opinion that maintains that one of the two angels was sent to save Lot. 18 Bereshit Rabbah, Chap. SO, states that each of the two angels sent to Lot had a separate task, one to save him, the other to destroy Sodom. For behold, both angels spoke to Lot. Furthermore, they said to him, for we will destroy this place (v. 13). 19 Which shows that both angels destroyed Sodom. Also, Lot later said to the angel, behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shown unto me in saving my life, etc. (v. 19). Now that very angel replied to Lot, Hasten thou, escape thither, for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither (v. 22). 20 We thus see that the very angel who saved Lot was also involved in the destruction of Sodom.

Verse 13

Verse 14

WHO MARRIED HIS DAUGHTERS. Lot had two other daughters who perished in Sodom. This is clear from Scripture's statement: Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters that are here (v. 15). 21 Which implies that he took the two daughters who were with him in the house. The term "here" implies that there were others. As to the number two, I.E. probably arrived at it as follows: Scripture speaks of sons-in-law, who married his daughters (v. 14). Thus Lot had married daughters. Daughters implies at least two.

Verse 15

AND WHEN THE MORNING AROSE. Rabbi Jonah, the Spanish grammarian, 22 Ibn Janah. said that it is ungrammatical to say u-khemo alah ha-shachar (and when arose the morning). 23 Our verse reads, u-khe-mo ha-shachar alah (and when the morning arose). The usual Biblical syntax for a clause such as ours is verb, noun, alah ha-shachar, rather than ha-shachar alah (Krinsky). Hence Ibn Janah's comments that kemo cannot come before a verb in the perfect. However, Rabbi Jonah seems to have forgotten the verse ve-ravu kemo ravu (and they shall increase as they have increased) (Zech. 10:8). 24 Kemo is connected to ravu, a verb in the perfect.
THEN THE ANGELS HASTENED. Va-ya'itzu (hastened) means they pressured. Compare, And the taskmasters were urgent (atzim), saying (Ex. 5:13).

Verse 16

[BUT HE LINGERED.] I am amazed by Ben Ephraim's 25 A Kariate Biblical commentator. commentary. He claims that va-yitmahmah (but he lingered) is

derived from the same root as mah (what). 26 It is written twice. S.D. Luzzato explains this as follows: When one rushes his companion, the latter replies, mah, mah, i.e., what do you want from me, why are you rushing me? Cf. Luzzato's commentary on Gen. 19:25. However, he seems to have forgotten that both hehs of va-yitmahmah are pointed. 27 The heh is silent in mah (what). However, it is pointed in va-yitmahmah (but he lingered). I.E.'s comment is difficult. Only the last heh in va-yitmahmah is pointed. Filwarg explains that what I.E. means is that the first heh has a sheva beneath it, while the final heh has a mapik. Hence va-yitmahmah cannot be derived from mah. In reality va-yitmahmah means lingered. It comes from a triliteral root 28 Its root is mem, heh, heh. This root means to linger. with the first letter written twice. 29 The mem is written twice in the word va-yitmahmah.
AND THE MEN LAID HOLD UPON HIS HAND. The verse notes that Lot was overcome with fear and had no strength to flee on his own.

Verse 17

[WHEN THEY HAD BROUGHT THEM FORTH.] Ke-hotzi'am (when they had brought) is an infinitive. Ke-hotzi'am should not be confused with le-hotzi'am (to bring them out), in to bring them out (le-hotzi'am) of the land of Egypt (Jer. 31:32), for in our verse the mem suffix stands for the subject, i.e., the angels. 30 While in le-hotzi'am the mem suffix stands for the object. The object of the sentence, Lot and his family, are indicated by the word otam (them).
LOOK NOT BEHIND THEE. Neither you nor any that belong to you. 31 Al tabbit (look not) is in the singular. I.E.'s point is that al tabbit did not only apply to Lot, but to his entire household. Thou shalt not eat of it (Gen. 2:17) 32 Thou shalt not eat of it is a singular. This command did not only apply to Adam. It also applied to Eve. Its meaning is thus: Neither you nor any of yours shall eat of it. Otherwise why would Eve have been punished? is similar.

Verse 18

OH, NOT SO MY LORD. Adonai (my lord) does not refer to God. It is vocalized with a kamatz only because it comes at the end of the verse. 33 Adonai with a kamatz usually refers to God. Here it does not. It means my lords. It is vocalized with a kamatz because the pattach changes to a kamatz at the end of a verse. Rabbi Samuel Ha-Nagid the Spaniard, of blessed memory, said that al (not so) in al na (Oh, not so) is derived from the same root as ho'il (wanted, was willing). 34 According to Rabbi Samuel the Nagid the word al is an imperative from the root yod, alef, lamed, meaning to want or to be willing (Krinsky). Lot's reply to the angels was: My lords, please accept (want, show willingness to) my request. However, I believe that al means no. The meaning of our verse is as follows: When the angels told Lot, escape to the mountain, Lot replied, "Oh, not so my lords."

Verse 19

He then turned to one of the angels and said, behold now, thy servant 35 Avdekha (thy servant) is in the singular. Hence I.E. says that this was addressed to the angel whom Lot considered to be the most important of the two. hath found grace in thy sight, etc. (v. 19). He did so because he considered this angel to be the more important of the two. The truth is that even among angels there are superiors who lord it over other angels. The tav of the root of mavet (death) is dropped in the word va-matti (and I die). The reason for this is that in the first person perfect a tav and a yod are added to the root. When the tav of the stem

and the tav of the suffix come together, the tav of the root is lost in the pronunciation. 36 Otherwise and I die would be written with two tavs, rather than with one. The tav of the root is dropped (swallowed is the term used by I.E.) because it is difficult to pronounce two tavs in succession. The word ve-kharatta (and cut down) in them thou mayest destroy and cut down (ve-kharatta) (Deut. 20:20) 37 If the tav were not lost, ve-kharatta (and cut) would have two tavs, rather than one, for in the second person singular perfect a tav is added to the root. is similar.

Verse 20

A LITTLE ONE. The meaning of mitzar (a little one) is small. It comes from the same root as tza'ir (young, little). It is an adjective. 38 Modifying city, which is not in the text. Hence the text should read mitzarah, rather than mitzar. Even so, it is written without a heh at its end. 39 City is feminine. Therefore the adjective modifying city should be feminine. A heh at the end of an adjective or noun indicates that the word is in the feminine. Compare, shegal (consort). 40 A consort is of course a female. Yet the noun shegal (consort) is written without a heh at its end.

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

FROM THE LORD. This is a poetic way of saying from Himself. 41 The verse reads: Then the Lord caused to rain upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. The second from the Lord is redundant. The line should have read: then the Lord caused rain…from Himself out of heaven. I.E. points out that it is poetic to repeat "the Lord" twice. The term I.E. uses for poetic is tzachot (elegant). Weiser interprets it to mean, in our context, precise. The Bible wanted to be precise. We similarly find Scripture repeating the term the children of Israel five times in one verse (Num. 8:19).

Verse 25

AND THAT WHICH GREW UPON THE GROUND. The trees growing there were consumed.

Verse 26

FROM BEHIND HIM. From behind Lot. 42 In contradistinction to Targum Jonathan, who interpreted the word to mean from behind her.
A PILLAR. Nitziv (pillar) means the same as matzevah. 43 Matzevah is the term usually used for pillar, hence I.E.'s comment. Her bones were burned by brimstone and she was encrusted in salt, 44 Weiser suggests translating: she became a pillar of salt. He believes im melech (with salt) to be an error for ammud melech (a pillar of salt). for it is

written, brimstone, and salt…like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim 45 We thus see that salt as well as brimstone descended upon Sodom. (Deut. 29:22). This verse also shows that Zoar was not destroyed. 46 Deut. 29:22 lists the following cities as being overthrown: Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zaboiim. Zoar is not mentioned. The latter is also borne out by the words of the angel. 47 Who said, that I will not overthrow the city of which thou hast spoken (v. 21).

Verse 27

Verse 28

AS THE SMOKE OF. Ke-kitor means as the smoke of. Kitor is derived from the same root as ketoret (incense). 48 Incense produces a lot of smoke. A FURNACE. A place where fire is continually burning.

Verse 29

WHEN HE OVERTHREW THE CITIES IN WHICH LOT DWELT. In one of which Lot had been living. 49 Lot did not dwell in all of the overthrown cities. He dwelt only in Sodom. Each of these is similar: Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in the cities of Gilead (Jud. 12:7); 50 Its meaning is: and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead. Even upon a colt the foal of she-asses (Zech. 9:9); 51 Its meaning is: Even upon a colt the foal of one of the she-asses. and And if a man take with his wife also her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they (Lev. 20:14). 52 They does not mean both women. It is only the second one who is burned. If a man is married to a woman and sleeps with her daughter, the daughter is burned. If he is married to the daughter and sleeps with her mother, then it is the mother who is burned. See I.E. on Lev. 20:14. Hence, although the plural is used, it means one of them.

Verse 30

Verse 31

AND THE FIRST-BORN SAID. Lot possibly had a wife who predeceased the wife who turned into a pillar of salt. 53 The Bible mentions that Lot had married daughters (v. 14) in addition to the ones whom he had at home (v. 8). It is unlikely that any of the unmarried daughters was older than any one of the married ones. I.E. therefore concludes that the married daughters were from a wife other than the mother of the first-born mentioned in our verse. Since the “elder” (literally, the first-born) was younger than the married daughters, she was from the second wife. In view of that fact that Scripture refers only to one wife in the account of Lot’s fleeing from Sodom, I.E. assumes that Lot’s first wife was then no longer alive. Lot’s daughters thought that the world was destroyed by fire and brimstone in the same manner that it had previously been destroyed by the flood.

Verse 32

Verse 33

WHEN SHE LAY DOWN. Be-shichvah (when she lay down) is an infinitive even though it is vocalized with a chirik beneath the shin. 54 We would expect a kamatz katan beneath the shin. Be-shivri 55 It, too, is an infinitive and is vocalized with a chirik beneath the first letter of the root. in When I break (be-shivri) your staff of bread (Lev. 26:26) is similar.

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

Verse 37

MOAB. Moab is the same as me-av and means from a father.
[UNTO THIS DAY.] No other people were intermingled with them. 56 Moab is still the ancestor of the Moabites because all of them are his descendants. Unto this day may also signify that the incestuous origin of the Moabites is known to this day. 57 The time that the Torah was written.

Chapter 20

Verse 1

Verse 2

OF SARAH HIS WIFE. The word el in el Sarah (of Sarah) should be rendered al (of, concerning). 1 El is usually rendered to. Thus our phrase would ordinarily be translated: And Abraham said to Sarah she is my sister. However, this makes no sense. Therefore I.E. points out that al also has the meaning of, concerning. El in For (el) this child I prayed (I Sam. 1:27) is similar. 2 If we translated el to mean to, this verse would read: to this child I prayed. This would be an impossible rendering.

Verse 3

The angel appeared to Abimelech in a dream because of God’s regard for Abraham’s honor. 3 Abimelech was no prophet and consequently would not experience prophetic visions. He did so only because God wanted to safeguard Abraham’s wife. It should be noted that Scripture says God appeared to Abimelech. I.E. explains that God came to him via an angel. Scripture tells us that both Abimelech 4 With regard to Abimelech it is written, And Abimelech King of Gerar sent, and took Sarah (v. 2). and Pharaoh 5 So I took her (Sarah) to be my wife (Gen. 12:19). took Sarah; 6 Hence both committed the same sin. nevertheless, God brought upon Pharaoh and his house great plagues, 7 Gen. 12:17. while the plagues brought on Abimelech and his house were of a lesser nature. The reason for this is that Abimelech was more righteous than Pharaoh.

Verse 4

[LORD, WILT THOU SLAY EVEN A RIGHTEOUS NATION?] The term nation includes Abimelech, his household and his kingdom. That this is so can be seen from Scripture. 8 Verse 9, in which we read, What hast thou done unto us…that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? Thus Abimelech was worried about his kingdom. Pay no attention to the dreamer 9 A term used by I.E. for one who comes up with a far-fetched interpretation. See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 2:11. According to Weiser the allusion is to Saadiah. Saadiah renders our verse, "Lord, wilt thou slay even a righteous man?" who changes the terms used in Scripture. The latter explains goy (nation) to mean ish (a person). I will elaborate a bit upon this in my comments on the verse to sell her unto a foreign people he shall have no power (Ex. 21:8). 10 Saadiah renders people as person. Cf. I.E.'s comment on Ex. 21:8.

Verse 5

Verse 6

TO TOUCH. Li-nego'a (to touch) means the same as la-ga'at. 11 Our verse employs li-nego'a. The root of li-nego'a is nun, gimel, ayin. In la-ga'at the nun is dropped; in li-nego'a it remains. The point is that in this peh nun the nun is not dropped in one form of the infinitive. It is treated as a shelemim, a root that does not drop a letter. We find the same with the root nun, tet, ayin (to plant). The same is true 12 The word can be expressed in two ways. with li-neto'a (to plant) 13 Cf. Is. 51:16. and la-ta'at. 14 Cf. Eccles. 3:2. All of the above are infinitives. 15 They are also kal forms.

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

WHAT HAST THOU DONE UNTO US? Meh (what) is vocalized with a segol because it precedes a guttural. 16 The ayin of asita (thou hast done) is vocalized with a kamatz. I.E. points out that the Hebrew word for "what" is always vocalized with a segol, (meh) whenever it comes before an ayin vocalized with a kamatz. The usual vocalization of "what" is with a pattach (mah), hence I.E.'s comment. This is the rule in Hebrew grammar.

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

AND MOREOVER SHE IS INDEED MY SISTER, THE DAUGHTER OF MY FATHER. Some say that this verse is to be understood in the same way as O God of my father Abraham (Gen. 32:10). 17 That daughter of my father is short for the daughter of my brother, the son of my father, in the same way as O God of my father Abraham is short for O God of my father's father Abraham (Weiser). Some identify Sarah with Iscah, the daughter of Haran. I.E. rejects this identification. Cf. I.E.'s commentary on Gen. 11:29. Krinsky suggests that what I.E. means is that grandchildren are considered as children. Thus Sarah, the daughter of Haran, was considered Terah's daughter and hence Abraham's sister. Similarly Jacob is considered Abraham's son. However, I believe that Abraham put Abimelech off with a timely excuse. When we come to the verse I am Esau thy first-born (Gen. 27:19), I will offer other examples of the same. 18 Jacob also was not telling the full truth.

Verse 13

WHEN GOD CAUSED ME TO WANDER. The word Elohim is to be rendered as God. 19 Hitu is the plural. Hence at first glance Elohim cannot refer to God since there is only one God. I.E. points out that even so, Elohim here refers to God. It should be noted that Onkelos apparently took Elohim as referring to idols. See also Rashi's note on this verse. Cf. M. Adler's commentary on Onkelos, Netivat Ha-Ger, Israel, 1968. The meaning of hitu oti Elohim (God caused me to wander) is that God made Abraham journey from place to place without Abraham knowing where he would go next. To'eh (wandering) in and, behold he was wandering (to'eh) in the field (Gen. 37:15) is similar. Hitu (caused me to wander) in our verse is not to be translated as caused me to err. 20 Onkelos renders to'eh as err. He explains when God caused me to wander as meaning: when the nations erred and followed idols, God drew me near to his service; i.e., ka-asher hitu (when the nations erred), oti Elohim (God took me). We find the Bible using the word to'eh in the sense of erring 21 According to Cherez. For an alternate interpretation see Krinsky. in O Lord, why does Thou make us to err (tatenu) from thy ways (Is. 63:17). 22 The root of err is tav, ayin, heh, the same as the root for wander. The word can therefore mean wander or err. Erring is an intellectual wandering.
SAY OF ME. Imri li 23 The word li usually means to me, hence I.E.'s comment. is to be rendered: say of me. And Pharaoh will say of the children of (le-vene) Israel (Ex. 14:3) 24 Here, too, the lamed means of, not to. is similar.

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

BEHOLD, IT IS FOR THEE A COVERING OF THE EYES. Some say that this alludes to the dimming of her son's (Isaac's) eyes. 25 Gen. 27:1. However, the latter is a Midrashic interpretation. 26 According to the Talmud (Megillah 15a; Baba Kama 93a), Abimelech cursed Sarah for deceiving him. The Talmud states, "Abimelech cursed Sarah and said, may your eyes be covered…The curse took effect on her seed as it is written, And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim." I believe that the phrase kesut enayim (a covering of the eyes) is to be read as if

written twice. 27 See I.E.’s comment on Gen. 2:8 and the note thereto. The verse should be read as follows: Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold, he is for thee a covering of the eyes; and he is also a covering of the eyes to all that are with thee. The Hebrew word hu can mean either he or it, Hebrew having no neuter term. I.E. translates the word hu in our verse as he and explains that it refers to Abraham. It is similar to the word not (al) in O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine anger, and chasten me in Thy wrath (Ps. 38:2). 28 The word not (al) in Ps. 38:2 is to be read as if written twice: O Lord rebuke me not in thine anger, chasten me not in thy wrath. There are many other such examples in Scripture. 29 In which a word written once is to be read as if written twice. See I.E.’s comments on Gen. 14:3. Our verse is to be interpreted as follows: Behold, he, viz., Abraham thy husband, is for thee as a covering of the eyes, i.e., no one will dare lift up his eyes to thee. 30 Because Abraham is your husband. What I.E. seems to be saying is that covering of the eyes refers to other men’s eyes, i.e., because of Abraham it is as if other men’s eyes are covered. He is similarly a covering of the eyes to all that are with thee, namely, the handmaidens who are married to his servants. 31 No one will molest any of the handmaidens; i.e., because of Abraham no one will dare lift up his eyes to Sarah or her handmaidens (Filwarg). Weiser explains I.E. as meaning that the handmaidens will honor Sarah and not treat her with disdain. Furthermore, the vav of ve-nokhachat (thou are righted) is rather like the Arabic fa. 32 This vav is not a connective but is similar to the Arabic fa which serves as a particle introducing the principal part of the sentence (Friedlander). There are thousands of similar vavs in Scripture, an example being On the third day Abraham lifted up (va-yissa) his eyes (Gen. 22:4). 33 If the vav of va-yissa were a connective vav, the verse would read: On the third day and Abraham lifted up his eyes. Ve-nokhachat (thou are righted) is a comment by Moses, 34 And not spoken by Abimelech. Abimelech would not first apologize and then reprimand Sarah; hence and after all this Sarah was chastened (ve-et kol nokhachat) is a comment by Moses on the affair. It should be noted that I.E. interprets ve-nokhachat (thou art righted) as chastened, and ve-et kol (and before all man) as: and all, which he explains to mean, and after all this. who added that Sarah did not ever again claim that Abraham was her brother. The meaning of ve-et kol (and before all men) is: after all this; i.e., after all this Sarah was chastened. 35 I.E. interprets ve-et kol ve-nokhachat as: and after all of this, and after this incident, she was chastened. Netter interprets I.E. as saying: even with all this honor done to her, Sarah was chastened. If the vav of ve-nokhachat were a connective vav, the phrase would read: and after all this and she was chastened, a very awkward construction. Others explain that behold, it is for thee 36 See note 27. According to this interpretation a covering of the eyes means a garment appealing to the eyes. refers to money which Abimelech gave for the purchase of a garment, and it is the word natati (I have given) that is to be read as if written twice. The verse is to be interpreted as follows: Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver to buy thee a covering (kesut), meaning a garment, that is appealing to the eye (enayim) and I have also given gifts to all that are with thee, and I have also given Abraham sheep, cattle, man and maidservants. 37 This is implied in ve-et kol (and all). It is to be interpreted ve-et kol asher natati, plus everything that I have already given. It should be noted that this third natati is implied in ve-et kol and does not pertain to the natati which is to be taken as if written twice. However, my above quoted interpretation is better. It means that Abraham is a covering of the eyes to thee, before the servants that you had prior to coming here and before the servants that I have given you. class="footnote">According to I.E. the root of ve-

nokhachat is yod, caf, chet, meaning to chasten, show (Weiser). For alternate interpretations of I.E.'s comment on this verse, see Filwarg. Similarly ve-et kol (and before all men) means, and before all men Abraham is your covering of the eyes. 38 That the covering of the eyes refers to Abraham.
According to this interpretation only ve-nokhachat (and she was chastened) 39 According to this interpretation Abimelech's statement concludes with: and before all men Abraham is your covering of the eyes. are the words of Moses. Hence the vav of ve-nokhachat is a connective vav as it is normally. Saadiah Gaon says that ve-nokhachat comes from nokhach (in front of). 40 It comes from the root nun, caf, chet, meaning in front of; i.e., you are now able to stand before anyone without shame (Weiser, Cherez). However, he is wrong. 41 <i

Verse 17

AND THEY BORE CHILDREN. That is, Abimelech's wife and maidservants. It does not refer to Abimelech. 42 Scripture says: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants, and they bore children. As to how and they bore children can apply to Abimemech, see note 48. The following are similar: and shed the blood of war in peace (I Kings 2:5); 43 In peace refers only to Abner, not to Amasa, although both are mentioned in the verse. He spoke unto them in the pillar of cloud (Ps. 99:7); 44 This refers only to Moses and Aaron but not to Samuel even though all three are mentioned in the previous verse. These are the sons of Adah (Gen. 36:12); 45 These are the sons of Adah refers only to Eliphaz and his descendants. It does not refer to Reuel or Amalek. The former was the son of Basemath and the latter the son of Timna. This is so even though both Eliphaz and Reuel are mentioned prior to These are the sons of Adah, Esau's wife (Weiser). for whom I have served thee (Gen. 30:26), 46 This refers to Jacob's wives not his children. This is so even though both are mentioned in Gen. 30:26. and the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods (Josh. 24:2). 47 And they served other gods refers to Tereh and Nahor, not to Abraham, even though all are mentioned in the verse (Weiser). That and they bore children does not apply to Abimelech is obvious from the fact that Abimelech per se is omitted from the verse which follows, For the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife (v. 18). I dwell on this point because there are commentators who insist that Abimelech's bowels were closed up and he could not eliminate. 48 See also Rashi who says, "Their bowels were opened and they eliminated. This is what Scripture means by and they bore."

Verse 18

However, the presence of the phrase all the wombs (v. 18) clearly refutes their interpretation. The term va-yeledu (and they bore children) is used when referring to women even though it is a masculine form. Compare, va-yechemu ha-tzon (and the flocks conceived) (Gen. 30:39). 49 Since it is the females who conceived, Scripture should have read, va-techamnah ha-tzon, rather than va-yechemu ha-tzon. In the same manner Scripture says, va-yeledu (and they bore), which is a masculine form, rather than va-teladnah, which is a feminine form.

Chapter 21

Verse 1

Verse 2

AT THE SET TIME OF WHICH GOD HAD SPOKEN TO HIM. The reference is to the angel who had asked, Where is Sarah thy wife? 1 Gen. 18:9. The same angel also returned to Abraham, for he had promised to do so. 2 I will certainly return unto thee when the season cometh round; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son (Gen. 18:10). I.E. points out that the angel kept his word even though this is not recorded in Scripture.

Verse 3

[ISAAC.] God never added any letter to Isaac's name; neither did He ever change it, for God Himself commanded Abraham to call his son Isaac. 3 Abraham's name received an additional letter (Gen. 17:5). Jacob's name was changed to Israel (Gen. 32:29). Isaac was the only one of Israel's three patriarchs not to have his name changed.

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

MAKING SPORT. Ishmael was acting as a boy is wont to act. Sarah was jealous because he was older than her son.

Verse 10

Verse 11

ON ACCOUNT OF HIS SON. Odot means account of.

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

AND A BOTTLE OF WATER. Chemet (bottle) is a vessel. It is possibly made out of skin or wood. Chamatekha (thy venom) in That puttest thy venom (chamatekha) thereto (Hab. 2:15) 4 I.E. renders chamatekha (thy venom) as thy vessel. is analogous. Many are amazed at Abraham's behavior. They ask, how could Abraham chase his son out of his house? How could he send away mother and child empty handed? Where was his kindness? However, I am amazed at those who are amazed at Abraham, for Abraham acted according to God's dictates. 5 God had told Abraham, in all that Sarah saith unto thee, hearken unto her voice (v. 12). Had he acted contrary to Sarah's wishes and given money to Hagar, then he would have transgressed God's command. However, ultimately, after Sarah's death, he gave gifts to Ishmael's children. 6 Gen. 25:6. The children of the concubines included Ishmael. As long as Sarah lived Abraham was bound to obey her with regard to Ishmael. After her death he was free to show his concern for Ishmael, and he did.
BREAD AND A BOTTLE OF WATER. He gave the bread and bottle of water to Hagar and placed them upon her shoulder. He then told her, "Take your son with you," and he sent her away. It is possible that Abraham gave Hagar some gold and silver, although this is not mentioned in Scripture. Abraham at that time lived in Gerar. He gave Hagar enough bread and water to last her till she reached Beersheba. 7 I.E. assumes that Beersheba was Hagar's destination and that Abraham gave her enough provisions to last her till she got there. He did not simply cast her out into the desert (Weiser). However, Hagar did not know the way and strayed in the wilderness of Beersheba. Ishmael became ill from lack of water. She took him to her bosom 8 I.E. previously noted that Hagar did not carry Ishmael. He therefore has to explain and she cast the child (Cherez). and when she saw that he was dying of thirst, she cast him under one of the shrubs.

Verse 15

UNDER ONE OF THE SHRUBS. One of the trees. 9 To provide him with shade (Krinsky).

Verse 16

AS IT WERE A BOWSHOT. Ki-metachave (as it were a shot) is not found elsewhere in the Bible. Its definition is known. 10 Weiser. It means the distance an arrow travels after being shot.

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

AN ARCHER. Compare, Call together the archers (rabbim) against Babylon (Jer. 50:29). Although roveh (archer) in our verse and rabbim (archers) (in Jer. 50:29) come from different roots, they mean the same thing. 11

The root of archer in our verse is resh, bet, heh ; in Jeremiah it is resh, bet, bet. We find a similar case with the words sarar and sarah (ruled over), 12 In Es. 1:22 sorer (bear rule) comes from the root sin, resh, resh ; in Hos. 12:4 sarah (he strove or ruled over) comes from the root sin, resh, heh (Krinsky). also the words ravah and ravav, both of which mean increased. 13 The root of ravah is resh, bet, heh. The root of ravav is resh, bet, bet.
ARCHER. Kashat (archer) is an adjective. Compare, gannav (thief). 14 Keshet is a bow, kashat an archer. That this is the case can be seen from its vocalization of a pattach kamatz. This vocalization indicates an adjective, as seen from the word gannav. Hence roveh is not in the construct with kashat. The verse is to be read: he was a shooter, an archer (Krinsky).
HAVE I EVEN HERE SEEN HIM THAT SEETH ME? 15 This phrase is taken from Gen. 16:13. Some suggest that there is a scribal error in our text and that this comment has been misplaced from 16:13. However, see next note. The angel first appeared to her here. 16 That is, she came to the same place where the angel had first appeared to her after she had been cast out by Sarah when pregnant with Ishmael (Chap. 16). Perhaps the original reading in I.E. was: and he dwelt in the wilderness, the place where she (his mother) once said, "Have I even here seen Him that seeth me" (Weiser).

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

THAT THOU WILT NOT DEAL FALSELY WITH ME. Tishkor (thou wilt deal falsely) is a kal. This is the only place in the Bible that this word appears in the kal.
MY SON'S SON. Nechdi is to be rendered the son of my son.

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

WHAT MEAN THESE. Hennah (these) is feminine.
BY THEMSELVES. Levaddanah (by themselves) is spelled with a heh at the end of the word. This is the only place in Scripture where the word is so written.

Verse 30

A WITNESS. Le-edah means a witness. It should be noted that the word for oath (shevu'ah) comes from the word for seven (shivah). 17 The number seven has a mystical meaning. An oath is somehow connected to this mystery. It is for this reason that Abraham took seven ewe lambs (Weiser). Since shevu'ah comes from shivah, Abraham called the place be'ersheva, rather than be'er shevu'ah. I will elaborate on this point in my comments on the term oh hishavah shevu'ah (or sweareth an oath). 18 For some reason I.E. did not elaborate on this in his comments on Num. 30:3. See Weiser. Also see I.E.'s comments on Zech. 4:10.

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

A TAMARISK-TREE. Eshel (a tamarisk tree) is a tree. 19 Cf. I Sam. 22:6. Some of the Talmudic sages interpret eshel to mean an inn (Sotah 10a), hence I.E.'s comment. The word va-yitta (and he planted) which precedes it is also proof of this. 20 Aside from the fact that we know from other sources that eshel is a tree, our verse also indicates the same.

Chapter 22

Verse 1

THAT GOD DID PROVE ABRAHAM. Some say that the word nissah (did prove, tested) is a variation of nissa (lifted up), 1 The problem which some commentators found in a literal translation of nissah as prove is that it seemed to imply that God did not know what Abraham's response to his request would be. They thus interpreted nissa as coming from nun, sin, alef, meaning lifted up; i.e., God exalted Abraham by showing him to be a paragon of absolute obedience to the Lord's will. Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 80:55. with the sin replacing the samekh 2 Nissah is spelled nun, samekh, heh ; nassah is spelled nun, sin, alef. and the heh replacing the alef. 3 The heh in nissah, like the alef in nasa, is silent. However, the plain meaning of the entire chapter contradicts this interpretation. 4 The chapter deals with a test, a trial. Hence nissah means proved, tested, not exalted. The word nissah is thus to be taken literally. The philosophers teach that there are two kinds of knowledge, knowledge of events prior to their occurrence, and knowledge of what is presently in existence. The latter is the meaning of God did prove, and for now I know (v. 12). 5 God knew (now I know) what Abraham would do if tested. However, until Abraham offered Isaac, God's knowledge was knowledge of the potential or possible. He tested Abraham (did prove) to actualize His knowledge (Krinsky). He now knew what Abraham did, not only what Abraham would do. Saadiah Gaon says that did prove means that God tested Abraham

in order to demonstrate his piety to mankind; furthermore, he interprets for now I know that thou art a God-fearing man (v. 12) to mean that now I have made known to all that thou art a God-fearing man. But didn't Saadiah know that even Abraham's young men were not present when he bound Isaac and placed him on the altar? 6 Cf. verse 5. In other words, no one was there to witness his act. Others say that and offer him there for a burnt offering is to be interpreted as: bring him up to the mountain; this will be considered as if you brought him up as a burnt offering. 7 The word translated as offer him { ve-ha'alehu) literally means bring him up. However, Abraham did not understand his prophetic vision 8 He thought that God actually wanted him to offer his son as a burnt offering. and hurried to sacrifice Isaac. God then told him, "I did not ask you to slay Isaac."Still others say that God told Abraham: act as if you were bringing him up as a burnt offering. We find a similar occurrence in connection with the prophet Jeremiah, who was commanded to Go unto the house of the Rechabites…and give them wine to drink (Jer. 35:2). 9 The Rechabites were foresworn by Rechab from drinking wine (Jer., Chap. 35). When God told Jeremiah, and give them wine to drink he did not intend that Jeremiah actually make them drink. Similarly God's intention was not that Abraham actually sacrifice Isaac. He wanted Abraham to make all the preparations necessary for the sacrifice, i.e., to bind Isaac, lay him on the altar, etc. He was to do everything as if he were offering him as a sacrifice. Now these geonim offered the above interpretations because they held that it is not possible that God would issue a command and then take it back. 10 God is unchangeable; hence his mind, too, is unchangeable. Therefore they offered the latter two interpretations. However, they overlooked the fact that God took the firstborn to serve Him and after a year replaced them with the Levites. 11 The first-born were at first sanctified to God to minister before him (Ex. 13:2). However, the next year the Levites took their place. Cf. Num. 3:40-44. In reality all questions are removed by Scripture's first stating that God did prove Abraham. 12 God did not change His mind. He never intended for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. The reason God tested Abraham was in order to reward him. 13 For his willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to His will. I.E. now backsteps and explains why God, who is all-knowing, tested Abraham. He had earlier insisted that "prove" is to be taken literally. He now explains why. He similarly alludes to the meaning of for now I know.
The meaning of for now I know that (v. 12) is the same as and if not, I will know (Gen. 18:21). 14 See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 18:21. I will also explain, if God who knows all hidden things will help me, the secret meaning of this term in my comments on I know thee by name (Ex. 33:12).

Verse 2

UPON ONE OF THE MOUNTAINS. The temple was later built on this mountain. This is explicitly stated in Scripture: So Solomon built the house on Mount Moriah. 15 Cf. I Kings 6:14 and II Chron. 3:1. The verse quoted by I.E. does not appear anywhere in the Bible. It is a composite of these two verses. It was not a very tall mountain. The threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite was on it.

Verse 3

AND HE CLEAVED THE WOOD FOR THE BURNT-OFFERING. And placed them on his ass. 16 I.E. derives this from Scripture's stating that after Abraham left his young men with the ass (v. 5), he placed the wood on Isaac (v. 6). This implies that until then the wood was on the ass (Weiser).

Verse 4

ON THE THIRD DAY. That he set out from Beersheba.

Verse 5

Some ask, how could Abraham say, and (we will) come back to you (v. 5)? 17 When he knew that only he would return. He should have said, "and I will return." Others answer them by saying that Abraham intended to return with Isaac's bones, and he disguised his intentions so that his young men would wait for him till he returned and Isaac would not know what was about to happen and flee. 18 A prophet may tell an untruth if necessary. See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 20:12; 27:19. Our sages, of blessed memory, say that Isaac was thirty-seven years old at the time of his binding. 19 Bereshit Rabbah 56:11. If this be a tradition, we will accept it. However, from a strictly logical point of view it is unacceptable. If Isaac was an adult at this time, then his piety should have been revealed in Scripture and his reward should be double that of his father for willingly having submitted himself to be sacrificed. Yet Scripture says nothing concerning Isaac's great self-sacrifice. Others say that Isaac was five years old at the time of his binding. This, too, is unacceptable, since Isaac carried the wood for the sacrificial pyre. 20 A child of five would be unable to carry that much wood. It thus appears logical to assume that Isaac was close to thirteen years old and that Abraham overpowered him and bound him against his will. Proof of this can be seen from the fact that Abraham hid his intention from Isaac and told him, God will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son (v. 8). Abraham knew that if he said, "You are to be the burnt-offering," Isaac would quite possibly have fled.

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

ABRAHAM, ABRAHAM. The repetition of the name expresses urgency.

Verse 12

Verse 13

BEHIND HIM A RAM CAUGHT IN THE THICKET. Abraham beheld a ram after (achar) it had been caught in the thicket by its horns. 21 Scripture reads: achar ne'achaz. This is ungrammatical. I.E. suggests that it be interpreted as if written, achar she-ne'echaz (after it had been caught). J.P.S. renders achar (after) as behind him. If the chet of ne'echaz (caught) is vocalized with a kamatz, then the word "was" is missing from the text and the meaning of the phrase is, after it was yet caught in the thicket. 22 In our texts the word ne'echaz (caught) is vocalized with a pattach. When ne'echaz is so vocalized it is a third person perfect, meaning it was caught. However, there are texts in which ne'echaz is vocalized with a kamatz. In this instance ne'echaz is a participle, meaning it is caught. If this be the case, then the word "was" has to be inserted in the text to make sense out of the verse, as "was" followed by a participle is proper Hebrew. There are many other similar instances. 23 "Was" followed by a participle indicates a continuous action. Compare, in Rabbinic literature, hu hayah omer { Aboth 1:2), literally translated, he was saying; i.e., he used to say. Others say that achar is connected to And Abraham lifted up his eyes. 24 The meaning of our verse being: and Abraham lifted up his eyes after this and saw a ram caught in the thicket by its horns. Until now I.E. explains achar (after) as being connected to caught. This new interpretation suggests that achar concludes the first clause in our verse. This is the opinion of Rashi and Onkelos. According to them our verse reads: And Abraham lifted up his eyes after this. But if this were so, the word achar would have been followed by ken or zot, 25 Cf. Vat. Ebr. 38 and Filwarg. Our text is probably corrupt. The word achar is always in the construct. When achar is not in the construct it is written, achar ken or achar zot. Hence our verse should read achar ken. Since it does not, achar cannot be connected to the preceding clause but rather to what follows. as is the case whenever the word achar (after) indicates a pause.

Verse 14

[IN THE MOUNT WHERE THE LORD IS SEEN.] The meaning of this clause can be ascertained in my comments on These are the words (Deut. 1:1). 26 I.E. implies in his commentary on Deut. 1:1 that certain phrases in the Pentateuch, among them this phrase, were added later.

Verse 15

Verse 16

BY MYSELF HAVE I SWORN. By Myself indicates a great and eternal oath. 27 An irrevocable oath.
BECAUSE. Ya'an (because) is similar in meaning to anah (testify or bear witness). 28 Ya'an is spelled yod, ayin, nun ; anah is spelled alef, nun, heh. Anah means to respond, answer, bear witness. The meaning of the term is: this act will testify and bear witness. 29 The primary meaning of ya'an is, what is going to happen will bear witness that, etc. Cf. I.E.'s comments on Is. 7:15 and Friedlander's comment thereto.

Verse 17

THE GATE OF HIS ENEMIES. Cities surrounded by walls having gates.

Verse 18

BECAUSE. Ekev (because) means a reward that is granted at the end. 30 Ekev means heel. The heel is the bottom of a person; hence it means the reward ultimately given (at the end) for a deed (Krinsky, Weiser, Cherez). Thus the clause should be rendered: as a reward for thou hast harkened to my voice.

Verse 19

SO ABRAHAM RETURNED. Isaac is not mentioned because he was under Abraham's care. Those who say that Abraham slaughtered Isaac and left him on the altar and following this Isaac came to life are contradicting Scripture. 31 Scripture explicitly tells us that God told Abraham not to slay Isaac (v. 12).

Verse 20

BEHOLD, MILKAH, SHE ALSO HATH BORNE. This is stated to inform us of Rebekah's pedigree. 32 The purpose of verses 20-23 is to inform us of Rebekah's pedigree.

Chapter 23

Verse 1

THE LIFE OF. The word life (chayyim) is always encountered in the plural. We never find it in the singular. [A HUNDRED AND SEVEN AND TWENTY YEARS.] Hebrew usually first lists the larger numbers and then the smaller ones. 1 Verse 1 literally reads, And the life of Sarah was a hundred and twenty and seven years. But we also find the opposite, an example being Scripture's enumeration of Jacob's years 2 Gen. 47:28 literally reads, So the days of Jacob, the years of his life were seven years and forty and a hundred years. Here Scripture lists the smaller numbers first. (Gen. 47:28).

Verse 2

KIRIATH-ARBA. Arba was the name of one of the great men of the Anakim. 3 Cf. Now the name of Hebron beforetime was Kiriath-arba, which Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim (Josh. 14:15); even Kiriath-arba, which Arba was the father of Anak (Josh. 15:13). The identification of Arba with Abraham is homiletical, 4 Bereshit Rabbah 14:6. as Abraham was not of that race. When Sarah died Abraham was elsewhere; hence Scripture states, and Abraham came.
AND TO WEEP FOR HER. The word livkotah is to be rendered to weep for her. And bewail her father (Deut. 21:13) 5 Livkotah is made up of two words, livkot (to weep) and the object otah (her). This combination of pronoun and object can only be made with a transitive verb. However, livkotah is intransitive. The meaning of livkotah is thus to weep her, an impossible rendering. Hence I.E. comments that the meaning of our word is to weep for her. He points out that the same is true in Deut. 21:13 (Krinsky). is similar.

Verse 3

BEFORE HIS DEAD. This alludes to the body. 6 His dead (meto) is in the masculine. However, Sarah was a woman. Thus Scripture should have used the feminine (metato). I.E. explains that dead refers to the body, guf, which is a masculine word (Cherez). [SAYING.] The explanation of this

term is found elsewhere in this commentary. 7 Ex. 19:3, or perhaps in his comments on verse 17 (Weiser).

Verse 4

I AM A STRANGER. When the word stranger (ger) stands by itself, it refers to a transient stranger.
And a sojourner (ve-toshav) means a resident stranger. 8 In other words, when sojourner (toshav) is coupled with stranger (ger) it means a resident stranger (Krinsky). Cherez disagrees. He thinks I.E. is only commenting on the word sojourner (toshav). Abraham said to them, "I am a sojourner among you. We are all mortal, I do not have a possession (achuzah) i.e., an inherited or bought piece of land 9 It comes from the root alef, chet, zayin (to hold). One holds on to land by inheritance or acquisition. Achuzah thus means a holding, the idea being a piece of property with a title. for use as a burial plot."

Verse 5

Verse 6

MY LORD. Not our lord. 10 Scripture states, And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying…Hear us, my lord. Since they apparently all spoke we would expect the use of the term our lord. One man spoke. He employed the term my lord because it is impolite to include others when one is speaking as a subordinate. 11 In other words, And the children of Heth answered does not mean they all spoke in unison. One man spoke on behalf of all. Had they all spoken, Scripture would have read adonenu. It should be noted that the entire verse, with the exception of adoni, is in the plural.
A MIGHTY PRINCE. Because thou art a prophet. The term elohim (mighty) is used in the sense of great. 12 The word elohim (translated by J.P.S. as mighty) usually means God.
SHALL WITHHOLD. Yikhleh means shall withhold. 13 The root caf, lamed, heh means to finish (see Gen. 2:1). The root caf, lamed, alef means to withhold (see Gen. 8:2; Ps. 40:12). Yikhleh is spelled with a heh in our verse. Hence I.E. points out that caf, lamed, heh can also mean to withhold. It can be spelled either with a heh or an alef. 14 Rashi makes the same point.

Verse 7

[AND BOWED DOWN.] I have given the grammatical explanation of this word in The Book of Foundation. 15 See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 2:17 and the notes thereto. Those who say that Abraham bowed down to God speak nonsense. 16 They are troubled by Abraham bowing before another human being. Scripture explicitly states that Abraham bowed to the children of Heth. Bowing means a bending of the head. 17 Abraham did not prostrate himself. The latter is done in prayer and only before God. He merely bowed his head as a sign of respect. It is a way of showing reverence. Moses also bowed before his father-in-law. 18 Ex. 18:7.

Verse 8

Verse 9

THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH. A cave within a cave.
FOR THE FULL PRICE. The opposite of male (full) is chaser (lacking). 19 Our verse reads, kesef male (the full price). The word male means full. The opposite of full is empty (rek). I.E. points out that in our case this does not apply. One cannot say, kesef rek (empty money). However, one can say, chaser kesef (money is lacking). Hence male in our verse means the full amount and it is the opposite of chaser, rather than of rek (Filwarg). Thus kesef male means the full price.

Verse 10

Verse 11

NAY. Not so, my lord, only hear me. 20 Nay, my lord, hear me, could conceivably be taken to mean: My lord should not hear me, hence I.E.'s comment (Filwarg).

Verse 12

BEFORE THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND. Abraham bowed before Ephron in the presence of the people of the land in order to honor him.

Verse 13

BUT IF THOU WILT, I PRAY THEE, HEAR ME. If you will do this 21 According to I.E. if thou wilt is short for thou wilt do this, i.e., give me the field. The verse should be interpreted as follows: But if thou wilt give me the field, I pray thee, hear me, I will give the price of the field; take it of me. I pray thee, hear me. Or it may mean, if you will do this, I pray thee, when I will give the price of the field, take it of me. 22 According to this interpretation I pray thee (lu) is connected to I will give rather than to hear me as it is in the first explanation. The verse should be interpreted as follows: But if thou wilt give me the field, hear me, I pray thee, when I give the price of the field, take it of me (Cherez).

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

CURRENT MONEY WITH THE MERCHANT. Merchants accept only the best currency.

Verse 17

WERE MADE SURE. The field was made sure and passed permanently into Abraham's possession. This verse and the one that preceded it are to be read as one verse. Similarly the verse opening with I am a stranger and a sojourner (v. 4) and the verse which precedes it are to be read as one verse. The ten pairs of verses that Saadiah Gaon listed as being in reality one verse are in fact not to be read as one verse. 23 Saadiah Gaon lists 10 pairs of Biblical verses that are to be interpreted as one

verse. I.E. disagrees with him. Saadiah's 10 pairs of verses are enumerated by Krinsky.

Verse 18

[IN THE PRESENCE OF THE CHILDREN OF HETH.] The local inhabitants. [BEFORE ALL THAT WENT IN AT THE GATE OF HIS CITY.] Those who happened to be passing by.

Verse 19

AND AFTER THIS, ABRAHAM BURIED SARAH HIS WIFE. After the burial of Sarah the field was made sure as a burial ground possession belonging to Abraham and his descendants. 24 I.E. points out that verse 20 does not repeat verse 17. The latter states that the field was made sure as a possession, the former that it was made sure as a burial ground for Abraham and his descendants (Filwarg). Scripture tells of the purchase of the field of Machpelah to teach us of the superiority of the land of Israel over all countries, both for the living and the dead. Moreover, it informs us that God's word to Abraham that he would possess the land as an inheritance was fulfilled. 25 Abraham now began to take actual possession of the land of Israel (Filwarg).

Chapter 24

Verse 1

AND THE LORD HAD BLESSED ABRAHAM IN ALL THINGS. With length of days, wealth, honor and sons, these being all the things that men desire to have. If the interpretation that Abraham had a daughter named Bakkol 1 Our verse reads, and the Lord had blessed Abraham ba-kol (in all things). According to the Talmud ba-kol is a proper noun. Cf. Baba Batra 16b, "He (Abraham) had a daughter named Bakkol." were correct, then Scripture should have read: and the Lord blessed Abraham "with" Bakkol. 2 If ba-kol is a proper noun then the preposition "with" is missing. Rather than reading ba-kol, the verse should have read, be-vakkol (with Bakkol).

Verse 2

PUT, I PRAY THEE, THY HAND UNDER MY THIGH. Some say that my thigh alludes to Abraham's circumcised member. 3 One who takes an oath must take hold of a holy object. The circumcised member is such an object. Cf. Shebuot 38b and Rashi. However, if this were the case, then Abraham should have made him swear by the covenant of circumcision, and not by the Lord. 4 One swears by the holy object that one is holding. I believe that it was customary in those days for a person to place his hand under the thigh of his master, its meaning being, "If you are subject to my authority, place your hand under my thigh." The lord then sat on his servant's hand. By doing so the servant, as it were, said to the master, "My hand is under your authority to do your will." This custom is still followed in India.

Verse 3

[THE GOD OF HEAVEN AND THE GOD OF THE EARTH.] God is so described in our verse because it is ordained in heaven who here on earth will be united in matrimony. This thing is a secret. 5 It is one of the secrets of creation (Krinsky). Or the one so ordained is a secret and man must pray that God send him his destined one. Abraham noted this so that his

servant would take with utmost seriousness the task laid upon him (Weiser).
OF THE CANAANITES. This includes all of the eleven Canaanite peoples.

Verse 4

BUT THOU SHALT GO UNTO MY COUNTRY. To Haran where he had once dwelt. 6 See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 12:1.
AND TO MY KINDRED. Ur of the Chaldees. 7 Cf. Gen. 11:31 and I.E.'s comments on Gen. 11:26.

Verse 5

PERADVENTURE. Ulai (peradventure) has many meanings in Scripture. 8 In our verse it means, and if (Weiser). It has a similar meaning in Hos. 8:7. If so (ulai) be it yield, strangers shall swallow it up (Hos. 8:7), is similar.
The heh of he-hashev (must I needs bring back) is vocalized with a segol 9 The heh interrogative (heh ha-she'elah) is generally vocalized with a chataf pattach, a furtive pattach. Before heh, alef, chet, ayin it is vocalzed with a pattach. However, here in he-hashev it is vocalized with a segol, hence I.E.'s comment. because the heh 10 The point is that before the letters heh, alef, chet, ayin vocalized with a long kamatz, the heh interrrogative is vocalized with a segol, hence the vocalization he-hashev. of the hifil which follows it is vocalized with a kamatz. 11 Hashev comes from the root shin, vav, bet. The heh of hashev is the sign of the hifil. If the first heh of he-hashev were vocalized with a pattach, it would be difficult to pronounce both hehs in succession. 12 That is, if the heh preceding heh, alef, chet, ayin vocalized with a long kamatz were to be vocalized with a pattach, it would be hard to pronounce both hehs in succession. Therefore it is vocalized with a segol.

Verse 6

[BEWARE.] When the word hishamer (beware) is penultimately accented it is related to the word shemirah (watching, guarding). 13 Thus when hishamer is penultimately accented it means be on guard, beware. This is the usual meaning of hishamer in Scripture. Cf. Deut. 8:11. However, when it is ultimately accented it is related to the word shemarim (lees). 14 In this case it means keep calm. Krinsky points out that Is. 7:4 is the only place in Scripture where hishamer is accented on the last syllable. Compare, hishamer (keep calm) in Keep calm (hishamer), and be quiet (Is. 7:4), which has the same basic meaning as shemarav (his lees) in And he hath settled on his lees (shemarav) (Jer. 48:11).

Verse 7

HE WILL SEND HIS ANGEL BEFORE THEE. This is a prayer. If it were a prophecy Abraham would not have said, And if the woman be not willing to follow thee (v. 8). 15 There would have been no need to make contingent plans if God had told Abraham that he would appoint a girl for Isaac from his kindred and country.

Verse 8

THOU SHALT NOT BRING MY SON BACK THITHER. He must remain in the land of Israel. Abraham said, thou shalt not bring my son back 16 Isaac never dwelt in the place where the servant was being sent. How, then, could Abraham say, thou shalt not bring my son back thither? One cannot bring back what was never there. Abraham should have said: thou shalt not bring

my son thither. because he (Abraham) was the root. 17 And Isaac, as it were, was the tree. If Abraham was the root, then it is as if Isaac were there. Thus on Seder night we read, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt (Deut. 6:21). If our ancestors were there it is as if their children were there (Krinsky).

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

AND HE MADE THE CAMELS TO KNEEL DOWN. He made them kneel upon their knees. 18 Va-yavrekh (and he made kneel) is a denominative of berekh (knee) (Weiser).

Verse 12

SEND ME, I PRAY THEE. Its meaning is, prepare for me what I desire. 19 The object (what I desire) is missing and must be supplied by the reader (Weiser). Because the Lord thy God sent me (Gen. 27:20) is similar. 20 Here, also, the object is missing and is to be supplied by the reader.

Verse 13

Verse 14

SHE THAT THOU HAST APPOINTED. The servant relied on the efficacy of the prophet's 21 Abraham. prayer. 22 Thou hast appointed implies that God had already chosen a bride for Isaac. How did the servant know this? I.E. suggests that the servant believed that God had accepted Abraham's prayer (Krinsky). Or I.E.'s point is that the servant did not set up a test to see if the Lord set aside a damsel for Isaac. He trusted that God had because he relied on Abraham's prayer (Filwarg). Throughout this section I.E. refers to the servant as "the servant." He apparently was uncertain as to whether to identify him with Eliezer, as the Midrash and other medieval commentators did. He was certain that God accepted it and sent an angel, the latter being God's very own messenger, to help him by appointing a damsel in a dream. 23 I.E.'s comment is vague. Weiser suggests that an angel appeared to Rebekah and directed (appointed) her to go out to the well. According to Krinsky the angel appeared to Rebekah's family in a dream and told them to appoint a damsel for Isaac. The servant reasoned that there was no family as charitable as his master's. 24 Hence a girl saying, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also would most probably be of Abraham's family (Krinsky). Many are perplexed 25 Taanit 4a. because they say that the servant expressed his request improperly. 26 In other words they claim that the servant selected an improper omen as proof of God's choice. "What would the servant have done if a lame or a blind girl would have offered to give him and his flocks water? What would he have done if she was not of Abraham's family and kindred" (Taanit 4a)? I, however, do not see anything wrong in what he said, for had it been another damsel, one not of Abraham's family, who offered to give him drink and water his camels, he would have left her and nothing would have been lost, for the verse

and said; Whose daughter art thou means he had previously said, before he gave the ring and bracelets to Rebekah, whose daughter art thou? 27 Verses 22 and 23 state that the servant first gave Rebekah a golden ring and two bracelets and then said, Whose daughter art thou? This implies that he took Rebekah for Isaac before he knew who she was. This contradicts what I.E. has just said, hence his interpretation. Scripture similarly states, And I asked her, and said: Whose daughter art thou? And she said: The daughter of Bethuel…And I put the ring upon her nose, and the bracelets upon her hands (v. 47). The sum of the matter is the servant prayed that God would appoint for Isaac a young lady from the family of his master, the sign of God's choice being that the damsel would act graciously as a woman of noble character should. 28 Cf. Cant. 7:2 (bat nadiv). God heard his prayer. However, the case of Jonathan is totally different. 29 I.E.'s point is that the servant did not really set up a test to determine God's will. He merely offered a prayer that God send him what he was looking for. His choice was not dependent on what the girl would do. If she acted in a certain way then he would investigate further. However, Jonathan set up a test. If such and such would happen he would act thus; if it did not, he would act differently. Jonathan's test related to his attacking the Philistines. Jonathan said, If they say thus unto us: Tarry until we come unto you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. But if they say thus: Come up unto us; then we will go up; for the Lord hath delivered them unto our hand; and this shall be the sign unto us (I Sam. 14:9, 10).

Verse 15

Verse 16

NEITHER HAD ANY MAN KNOWN HER. It is extremely unlikely that Scripture speaks of abnormal intercourse. 30 Cf. Rashi's comment on this verse. The verse rather refers to a certain intercourse method wherein it is possible to sleep with a virgin and even to impregnate her without deflowering her. However, it is unseemly to describe how this can be done.

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

AND THE MAN LOOKED STEADFASTLY ON HER. Mishta'eh (looked steadfastly) means the same as mishtomem 31 Both mishta'eh and mishtomem come from roots meaning wasted and themselves mean astonished, perplexed or awe-struck. (astonished, awe-struck). It comes from the same root as sha'u

and tisha'eh (waste) in Until cities be waste (sha'u) (Is. 6:11), 32 Mishta'eh tisha'eh and sha'u come from the root shin, alef, heh. and And the land become utterly waste (tisha'eh shemamah) (Is. 6:11).
The meaning of lah (on her) is because of her. 33 The word lah usually means to her. However, it cannot be so translated in our verse. The servant was not astonished to her; he was astonished because of her. Then Daniel…was appalled (eshtomam) for a while (Dan. 4:16) is similar. 34 Daniel was perplexed or astonished. In this verse, too, a word (eshtomem) from a root meaning waste (shin, mem, mem) is used to describe one who is awe-struck or astonished. See note 31. The tav of mishta'eh is not part of the root of the word but is the sign of the hitpa'el conjugation. It is like the tav of nitra'eh 35 The root of nitra'eh is resh, alef, heh. The tav of nitra'eh is the tav of the hitpa'el. in let us look (nitra'eh) one another in the face (II Kings 14:8). Mishta'eh definitely does not come from the root shin, tav, heh (drink). 36 Some versions of Onkelos read, and the man was drinking. See Krinsky. According to this interpretation the man acted as if he was drinking, but he was really looking at Rebekah (Cherez).

Verse 22

A GOLDEN RING. Nezem (ring) can refer either to a nose ring 37 See verse 47. or to an earring. 38 See Gen. 35:4. The one worn on the nose is attached by a string which is tied around the forehead. 39 Krinsky suggests that I.E. was not aware of the fact that nose rings are inserted in the pierced nostril.
HALF A SHEKEL. Beka means half a shekel. It comes from the same root as nivka (was cleft). 40 See Gen. 7:11. A beka is thus a split shekel, i.e., half a shekel.
AND TWO BRACELETS. Tzemidim (bracelets) comes from the same root as tzamid (cover of a vessel) in covering (tzamid) close-bound (Num. 19:15). 41 Tzemed means a pair. Cf. a couple of asses (tzemed chamorim) (Jud. 19:10). According to I.E. a tzamid (Num. 19:15) is a cover made up of two parts. Cf. I.E.'s comments on Num. 19:15. Hence a tzemed is a bracelet made of two parts. A bracelet is called a tzamid because each bracelet worn on the hand is made up of two parts. 42 For a different interpretation see Filwarg. The form of this ornament is well known.

Verse 23

TO LODGE IN. La-lin (to lodge in) is in the hifil. If it were a kal it would read la-lun.

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

AND PROVENDER. Mispo (provender) is a general term for cattle feed. The Bible could have used barley in its place. 43 Barley was used as animal feed. See I Kings 5:8 and Sotah 14a.

Verse 33

AND THERE WAS SET. Va-yusam (and there was set) is in the hofal. It is like va-yushav (brought) in And Moses and Aaron were brought (va-yushav) (Ex. 10:8). 44 Va-yushav is a hofal.

Verse 34

Some say that the statement I am Abraham's servant is connected to I will not eat, the meaning of the verse being: I am Abraham's servant and there are certain foods which we are prohibited from eating. However, I believe that the meaning of the servant's words are self-evident. 45 Since God sent him good speed he did not want to eat till he had completed his task (Krinsky). It is proper to take care of one's obligations first and then to eat (Weiser).

Verse 35

Verse 36

Verse 37

Verse 38

Verse 39

Verse 40

Verse 41

THEN SHALT THOU BE CLEAR FROM MY OATH. The servant did not say, from my shevu'ah (oath). 46 He said, from my alah. However, in verse 8, Scripture employs the term shevu'ah. Alah is an oath which has a curse attached to it. Cf. Num. 5:21. The servant thus emphasized that the oath he took had a curse attached to it; i.e., a curse would fall upon him if he violated the oath (Weiser). What he meant was, "I fear my master and his curse."

Verse 42

Verse 43

Verse 44

Verse 45

Verse 46

Verse 47

Verse 48

Verse 49

KINDLY. Chesed (kindly) denotes an act which one is not obligated to perform.
AND TRULY. Emet (truly) denotes keeping the promise to deal kindly. The word emet comes from the same root as emunah (steadfastness). 47 The root being alef, mem, nun. The tav of emet is the sign of the feminine. 48 If the root of emet is alef, mem, nun, where does the tav come from? I.E. points out that it is the sign of the feminine. The word should read amenet. However, the nun of the root is dropped (Krinsky).

Verse 50

Verse 51

AS THE LORD HATH SPOKEN. As the Lord hath decreed. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made (Ps. 33:6) 49 In Hebrew bi-devar adonai. I.E. renders this verse: By the decree of the Lord were the heavens made. is similar. On the other hand, it may mean: as the Lord hath appointed in a dream. 50 See I.E.'s comment on verse 14 and the notes thereto.

Verse 52

Verse 53

PRECIOUS THINGS. Migdanot (precious things) comes from the same root as megadim 51 From the root mem, gimel, dalet. In this case the nun of migdanot is not a root letter. (precious) (Cant. 4:13). 52 Cant 4:13 reads, precious fruits (magadim). He thus gave them precious or sweet fruits. On the other hand, it may mean expensive garments. In the latter case the nun of migdanot is part of its root, 53 Its root being gimel, dalet, nun. In this case the mem is not a root letter and the word is a hapax legomenon (Filwarg). and the word migdanot follows the paradigm of mitpachot (cloaks). 54 Is. 3:22. Here, too, the mem is not a root letter but is the mem of the paradigm.

Verse 54

Verse 55

AND HER BROTHER AND HER MOTHER SAID. They received the gifts and Bethuel was silent. 55 I.E. disagrees with the Midrash, which states that an angel slew Bethuel for trying to prevent the marriage. Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 60:12, and Rashi. It is possible that Laban was wiser and more respected than his father, for we find, Then Laban and Bethuel answered (v. 50). 56 Since Laban is mentioned before Bethuel we may surmise that he was more respected than Bethuel, or else he would not have dared to speak before his father.

Verse 56

Verse 57

Verse 58

Verse 59

AND HER NURSE. In former days. 57 Rebekah, being of marriageable age, had no need for a nurse. I.E. disagrees with the Midrashic statement that Rebekah was three years old at that time. See Seder Olam, Chap. I.

Verse 60

Verse 61

AND THEY RODE UPON THE CAMELS. That the servant brought with him.
AND WENT HIS WAY. Va-yelakh (and went his way) is vocalized with a pattach rather than a kamatz even though it closes a verse, 58 A pattach

usually changes to a kamatz at the end of a verse. We would thus expect va-yelakh to be vocalized with a kamatz. the reason for this being that this word is normally vocalized with a segol, and a vowel cannot go up two steps. 59 And he went is usually written with a segol (ya-yelekh). However, since here it closes a verse, the segol changes to a pattach. It cannot change to a kamatz because it would then be going up two steps, that is, from a segol to a kamatz, skipping the step of pattach. The normal sequence of the vowels followed by I.E. is segol pattach, kamatz. The same principle applies to the word va-yomar (and he said). 60 Va-yomer (and he said) is vocalized va-yomar with a pattach and not a kamatz, at the close of a verse.
The meaning of And the servant took Rebekah, and went his way is that he took Rebekah under his personal care until Isaac came up toward them and did not experience any hardship in caring for her. 61 The servant did not assign any of the people with him to take care of Rebekah. He did so himself and did not consider it a burden, so devoted was he (Weiser).

Verse 62

AND ISAAC CAME FROM THE WAY OF BEER-LAHAI-ROI. Beer-lahai-roi has two names. 62 Bo and Beer-lahai-roi. The Hebrew reads, ba mi-bo be'er-la-chai ro'i. If the Bible meant Isaac came from Beer-lahai-roi it should have read, ba mi-be'er-la-chai-ro'i. The word mi-bo thus presents a problem. This interpretation suggests that the verse be translated: Isaac came from Bo-beer-lahai-roi, the latter being a combination of both names (Cherez). Others say that ba mi-bo (came from the way) means came from the inside of. 63 I.e., mi-bo means from inside. They explain our verse to mean that Isaac came from inside (mi-bo) of Beer-lahai roi. The latter was a town in which the well by that name was located. The town took the name of the well. Isaac had some business in this town and was leaving it when he met Rebekah (Weiser). They similarly explain the word mi-bo in Every house is shut up, that none may come in (mi-bo) (Is. 24:10). However, I believe that mi-bo is an infinitive 64 That is, it consists of the infinitive bo (come) plus the prepositional mem. Thus mi-bo means from the way. and ba mi-bo be'er-la-chai-ro'i means came from the way leading to Beer-lahai-roi. 65 That is, Isaac was returning from a visit to Be'er-lahai-roi.
FOR HE DWELT IN THE LAND OF THE SOUTH. For at the time he dwelt there (in the Negev). The latter is in the southern part of the land of Israel. 66 Isaac lived in the Negev. He happened to be coming from Beer-lahai-roi on that day (Weiser).

Verse 63

AND ISAAC WENT OUT TO MEDITATE. The word la-su'ach (to meditate) means to walk among the trees. 67 See Gen. 2:5, si'ach ha-sadeh (shrub of the field).
AT THE EVENTIDE. Close to sunset. The opposite of li-fenot erev (at the eventide) is lifnot boker (before the dawning of the day). I will give a full explanation of these terms in the Torah portion Ki Tetze. 68 Deut. 21:10 - 25:19. Cf. I.E.'s comment on Deut. 23:12, where he notes li-fenot erev means before evening.

Verse 64

[SHE ALIGHTED FROM THE CAMEL.] Of her own free will. 69 The Hebrew reads va-tippol (she fell). Krinsky explains that I.E. translates she fell as she willingly fell from the camel. Weiser explains that she came off the camel in order to bow; that is, she alighted. Compare, he fell upon his face (Num. 16:4). What is reported in the following verse took place

before, for the meaning of va-tomer el ha-eved is: And she had said unto the servant. 70 The sequence of events was as follows: And Rebekah lifted up her eyes and saw Isaac (v. 64) and she said unto the servant, "What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?" And the servant said, "It is my master." And she took her veil and covered herself (v. 65). And she alighted from the camel (v. 64) (Cherez).

Verse 65

AND COVERED HERSELF. Va-titkas (and covered herself) is in the hitpa'el. The first tav is the sign of the third person feminine, and the second tav, the tav of the hitpa'el.

Verse 66

Verse 67

INTO HIS MOTHER SARAH'S TENT. This is short for the tent, tent of Sarah his mother. 71 The Hebrew reads ha-ohelah Sarah immo. Now a word with the emphatic heh cannot be in the construct Hence the verse literally reads: the tent Sarah his mother. I.E. maintains that an additional word, tent, has to be added to the text. The text should be read as if written, the tent, tent of Sarah his mother. More literally, the tent, Sarah his mother's tent. Even the prophecy of Oded the prophet (II Chron. 15:8) 72 The text literally reads: ve-ha-nevu'ah Oded ha-navi (even the prophecy, Oded the prophet). I.E. suggests, for the reasons given in note 67, that the word nevu'at (prophecy of) is to be supplied by the reader. The verse should thus be read: the prophecy, Oded the prophet's prophecy, more literally, even the prophecy, prophecy of Oded the prophet. and Thy throne given of God (Ps. 45:7) 73 A word ending in the suffix kha cannot be in the construct. The verse literally reads: Thy throne, God. I.E. suggests the word kisseh be inserted after thy throne. The verse is to be explained: Thy throne, God's throne, more literally, Thy throne, throne of God. are similar.

Chapter 25

Verse 1

KETURAH. Keturah is not to be identified with Hagar 1 See Bereshit Rabbah 61:4; also Rashi's comments. because Scripture explicitly states, But unto the sons of the concubines (pilagshim), that Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts (v. 6). 2 "Concubines" indicates that Abraham had more than one concubine. If Keturah and Hagar were one and the same person the verse would have read concubine. I.E. goes on to note that pilegesh (concubine) refers exclusively to a handmaid to forestall the argument that verse 6 refers to male slaves (pilagshim has a masculine ending) and therefore negate his argument that Abraham had more than one concubine. The meaning of pilegesh (concubine) is a handmaid. This term cannot refer to a male. We can explain upon concubinage (Ezek. 23:20) as referring to females. 3 The printed editions have, "We can explain on concubines as women." If we accept this reading the point that I.E. is apparently making is that even though the word pilagshim has a masculine ending it refers to females (Weiser). However, Filwarg and Krinsky, as well as Weiser himself, point out that I.E. may be alluding to Ezek. 23:20, And she doted on concubinage (pilagshehem) with them, whose flesh

is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue is like the issue of horses. The words be-saram (whose flesh) and zirmatam (whose issue) are masculine; hence the concubines spoken of in this verse appear to be males. Indeed, Kimchi in his comments on Ezek. 23:20 quotes an opinion which maintains that the concubines referred to in this verse are male slaves. Therefore I.E. points out that pilagshim refers only to females. Filwarg suggests amending our texts of I.E. to read pilagshehem, as in Ezek. 23:20. In this case the allusion to Ezekiel would be unmistakable. The fact of the matter is that Vat. Ebr. 38 reads al pilagshehem, and we have translated accordingly.

Verse 2

Verse 3

ASSHURIM. Some say that asshurim means those who know the roads 4 Caravaneers. This interpretation connects asshurim with ashur (step or going). See Job 31:7; Prov. 14:15. and letushim, those who see from afar. 5 See Job 16:9, yiltosh enav (sharpeneth his eyes). This term, too, pertains to their occupation as caravaneers. However, I believe that asshurim and letushim are proper nouns and not adjectives.

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

GIFTS. He gave them money. 6 That is, movable possessions, in contrast to real estate (Weiser).
EASTWARD. Kedemah (eastward) means unto the East country. And it shall come to pass, that the nation and the kingdom which will not serve him, Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (Jer. 27:8) 7 This is the literal reading of the verse. J.P.S. translates, And it shall come to pass, that the nation and the kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. is similar. East means east of the land of Israel. 8 Eastward refers to the entire eastern compass point, be it northeast or southeast (Weiser). According to this interpretation unto the east country is an explanation of eastward in the same way that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is an explanation of him. Others say that kedemah (eastward) means to the place where the son of Ishmael dwelt. 9 This explanation is that kedemah means to Kedemah. Kedemah was a son of Ishmael (v. 15). According to this interpretation the verse is not redundant in stating unto the east country, for it is telling us where Kedemah dwelt. The first of these two interpretations is the correct one.

Verse 7

Verse 8

[AND ABRAHAM EXPIRED.] Expired refers to a death wherein the soul leaves the body in a moment, without pain or delay. Proof of this is he (Jacob)

gathered up his feet unto the bed and then immediately expired (Gen. 49:33). 10 We thus see that gava refers to a quick and painless death. Every expiration (gevi'ah) is a death, but not every death is an expiration (gevi'ah). Hence Scripture states, with regard to those who perished in the flood, And all flesh expired (Gen. 7:21). 11 According to I.E., Gen. 7:12 teaches that the flood killed swiftly (Weiser).
The meaning of, and (Abraham) died 12 There was no need to state "and Abraham died" after stating "and he expired," since expired means he died quickly. is that he died at a ripe old age. 13 And Abraham died is not redundant since it is not connected to expired but to what follows, i.e., and Abraham died in a good old age (Filwarg).
AND WAS GATHERED TO HIS PEOPLE. Some say that this refers to the soul of life which, even while functioning 14 I.E. uses the term kevod ha-nefesh literally, the glory of life. The "glory" refers to man's soul which gives life to the body. in the body, is a separate entity. When it separates from the body it returns to its source. 15 According to I.E. man's soul is derived from a universal soul. While in the body the soul does not share the former's corporeal properties. It has its own existence and can function independently of the body. It is thus a "separate entity" (Levine, p. 13). Others say that and was gathered to his people is a mere idiom. 16 According to this interpretation there is no philosophical implication in the verse. One who follows in the footsteps of his ancestors is said, as it were, to be joining them. But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace (Gen. 15:15) is similar.

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

AND BY THEIR ENCAMPMENTS. Tirotam (encampments) means palaces. Compare, a turret of silver (tirat kasef) (Cant. 8:9).
ACCORDING TO THEIR NATIONS. We find Scripture employing ummot (nations) and ummim (nations), 17 Num. 25:15 (ummot); Ps. 117:1 (ummim). The former has a feminine ending, the latter, a masculine ending. Our verse (

le'ummatam) employs the former. both of which are vocalized with a shuruk. 18 Actually a kubbutz. I.E. refers to both a kubbutz and a shuruk by one term, shuruk. Cf. L. Prijs, Die Grammatikalische Terminologie Des Ibn Ezra, Basel, 1950, p. 136. The lamed of le-ummatam (according to their nations) is a preposition, 19 It is not a root letter. It means according to. similar to the lamed of le-goyehem (after their nations). It is not the same as the lamed of ba-le'ummim (upon the peoples) (Ps. 149:7) which is a root letter like the lamed of le'om (people) in And the one people (u-le'om) shall be stronger than the other people (mi-le'om) (v. 23). Whether spelled with a lamed or not, it has the same meaning. However, they come from different roots. 20 That is, both om and le'om mean the same, but come from different roots. The root of om is alef, vav, mem and that of le'om, lamed, alef, mem (Cherez, Krinsky).

Verse 17

Verse 18

OVER AGAINST ALL HIS BRETHREN. Zimram and Jokshan. 21 Verse 2.
HE DID SETTLE. 22 The verse literally reads: upon the face of his brethren he (or it) fell. I.E. points out that fell must refer to Ishmael's portion or to Ishmael himself. It may also mean settled. The meaning of nafal (fell) is that his portion or his lot fell among his brethren. Or it refers to the fact that most of the Ishmaelites journeyed from place to place. In this case nafal 23 That is, it means passed over. is like nofel in Thou fallest away (nofel) to the Chaldeans (Jer. 37:13). However, this is a bit far-fetched in view of the fact that his brethren were in the east (v. 6), and Egypt and Asshur are west 24 This comment presents a problem in view of the fact that Assyria (Asshur) lies east of the land of Israel. Krinsky suggests that Asshur does not refer to the Assyrians but rather to the children of dedan who were Asshurim (v. 3). of the land of Israel. 25 It is hard to believe that they had so large an inheritance. I.E.'s comment applies to all the interpretations of nafal offered up to this point. It is possible that this verse deals with Ishmael's death. He died during the lifetime of his brethren, after he fell. 26 He fell off a roof or out of a tree and died (Krinsky). This interpretation is possible because we do not know any of the causes of his death. Cohen, on the other hand, suggests that I.E. held that fell means fell dead. We do not know the cause of Ishmael's death.

Verse 19

AND THESE. After recording the generations of Ishmael, Scripture returns to record the progeny of Isaac, Esau and Jacob. Some say that Abraham begot Isaac means that Isaac resembled his father, and all who looked upon him could tell that he was Abraham's son. 27 Baba Metziah 87a and Rashi. Others say that holid (begot) means raised and brought up, as in were born 28 I.E. renders yulledu as: were brought upon Joseph's knees. They obviously were not born on his knees. (yulledo) upon Joseph's knees (Gen. 50:23). This interpretation is substantiated by And he sent them away from Isaac his son (v. 6). 29 He did not raise the sons of the concubines but he raised Isaac.

Verse 20

OF PADDAN. Paddan means a field. It has the same meaning in Arabic. 30 Similarly Rashi.

THE SISTER OF LABAN. Laban is mentioned because he was better known and more revered than her father. Elisheba…the sister of Nahshon (Ex. 6:23), is similar.

Verse 21

AND ISAAC ENTREATED. Va-yetar (entreated) is in the kal. However, hatiru (entreat) in Entreat the Lord (Ex. 8:4) is in the hifil. Its meaning is that Isaac appeased 31 Vocalizing the resh, tzadi, heh with a chirik and reading the word ritzah, as in Vat. Ebr. 38. God with his prayers. 32 Reading bi-devarim as in Vat. Ebr. 3 8, rather than bi-divrehem as in the printed texts. The latter reading is extremely difficult. It reads: ratzah (he wanted)… bi-divrehem (their words). Krinsky tries to justify this reading by maintaining that I.E. explains why entreat is here in the kal and in Ex. 8:4 in the hifil. It is here in the kal because God wanted their prayers. However, He really did not want to hear prayers on behalf of Pharaoh, hence the hifil form in Exodus. The latter being in the causative form implies that Moses burdened God with his prayers on behalf of Pharaoh. Krinsky also suggests that the text be read: he appeased God (vocalizing ritzah rather than ratzah) with their prayers, that is, with Isaac and Rebekah's prayers. This is a bit forced. Vat. Ebr.'s reading is superior and has been followed.
AND THE LORD LET HIMSELF BE ENTREATED. Va-ye'ater means and He was appeased. It is a nifal.

Verse 22

AND THE CHILDREN STRUGGLED TOGETHER. Va-yitrotzatzu (and they struggled) comes from the word that means running. 33 The root of run is rash, vav, tzadi. According to I.E., And the children struggled…within her is to be rendered: and the children ran within her, that is, moved quickly within her. The tzadi is doubled. 34 As is the rule when an ayin vav is conjugated in the hitpa'el. Its parallel is found in They run to and fro (yerotzetzu) like the lightnings (Nahum 2:5). 35 Yerotzetzu (run to and fro) is from the root resh, vav, tzadi. The tzadi is doubled in keeping with the rule that the last letter of an ayin vav is doubled when conjugated in the pi'el. The Bible refers to the fetuses as children 36 Banim (children) always refers to born children. A fetus is not a child (Krinsky). because that is what they ultimately became. 37 The Hebrew reads: nekre'u banim al shem sofam. And stripped the naked of their clothing (Job 22:6) 38 One cannot strip the naked. is similar. Rebekah asked women who had children if they had had a similar experience. They responded that they did not.
Rebekah then said, if it, namely, the manner and custom of pregnancy, be so as they said, wherefore do I undergo such an abnormal pregnancy. 39 Lammah zeh anokhi (Wherefore do I live) literally reads: why, then, am I, which I.E. interprets to mean: why, then, am I undergoing an abnormal pregnancy. It should be noted that according to I.E., Rebekah's questioning of the other women is not stated in the text but is implied by her saying, im ken lammah zeh anokhi.

Verse 23

AND THE LORD SAID UNTO HER. Via a prophet, or through Abraham himself, for Abraham did not pass away until her sons were fifteen years of age. 40 Abraham begot Isaac at the age of 100 (Gen. 21:5). Isaac was 60 when he begot Jacob and Esau. Abraham lived 175 years (Gen. 25:7). Thus Jacob and Esau were 15 when Abraham died.
THE ELDER. Elder is the subject. 41 Et, the indicator of the direct object, is missing in our verse. I.E. points out that even so, elder is

the subject and younger the object, the meaning of our verse being the elder shall serve the younger. Ve-rav ya'avod tza'ir is the same as ve-rav ya'avod et hatza'ir. One can argue that since this verse is poetic it has placed the object first and the subject last and that its intention is to teach that the younger shall serve the elder, hence I.E.'s comment. A son honoureth his father (Mal. 1:6) is similar. 42 Here, too, et is missing. However, it is obvious that it is the son who honors the father and not the reverse. We thus see that the Bible at times omits et. Nevertheless, the syntax of the sentence remains subject (son), object (father). Similarly in our verse the subject (elder) is stated first and the object (younger) afterward. I will explain our verse later. 43 See I.E. on Gen. 27:40.

Verse 24

TWINS. The root letter alef is missing in the word tomim (twins). Tomim in this regard is like the word sheritikha (release thee) 44 This is the J.P.S. translation. I.E. renders it your remnant. She'erit is usually spelled with an alef, which is missing in our verse. Thus tomim is like sheritikha in that the root alef is missing in both words. Tomim should have been written te'omim and sheritikha, she'eritkha. in Verily I will release thee (sheritikha) for good (Jer. 15:11), the meaning of which is: I will deal well with thy last years (she'erit). 45 Your last years, your she'erit, will be happy years. Cf. Kimchi's comment on this verse.

Verse 25

[RUDDY.] The yod of admoni (ruddy) is superfluous. It is similar to the yod of akhzari (cruel). 46 Akhzar and akhzari mean the same thing, cruel. Hence its yod is superfluous. Similarly admoni and admon mean the same thing and Scripture could have read admon.
[LIKE A MANTLE.] Ke-adderet (like a mantle) is not in the construct with se'ar (hairy). 47 That is, the text is not to be interpreted as kullo ke-adderet se'ar (all over like a hairy mantle) but as kullo se'ar ke-adderet (all over hairy; like a mantle). In other words, kullo (all over) refers to se'ar (hairy) even though the word ke-adderet (like a mantle) separates the two (Krinsky). The verse is to be read as follows: all over hairy, like a mantle. However, others say that ke-adderet is in the construct with se'ar. 48 In this case the verse reads: all over like a mantle of hair.
AND THEY CALLED HIS NAME. Those who saw him called him thus. The name Esau possibly connotes a unique occurrence (ma'aseh). 49 Krinsky maintains that I.E., like Rashi, explains Esau to mean asui, a participle meaning made, the idea being that Esau was born a complete man. Filwarg explains that Esau's birth was a unique event (ma'aseh) in that unlike all other children he was born hairy. This birth was extremely wondrous. Every human being leaves the womb in a placenta which covers him. 50 Thus Jacob and Esau were each in a separate placenta. The fact that Jacob and Esau's individual placentas opened simultaneously made their birth exceptional. However, in this instance the two placentas opened simultaneously. 51 This is obvious since Jacob was born grasping Esau's heel.

Verse 26

AND HIS NAME WAS CALLED. Someone, or Isaac his father, called him Jacob. 52 Literally, he called his name. The subject (he) is not identified, hence, I.E.'s comment.

Verse 27

A CUNNING HUNTER. Esau was constantly practicing deception, for most animals are trapped through trickery. 53 Scripture's purpose in telling us at this point that Esau was a hunter is to inform us that Esau was a cunning and deceptive individual (Weiser). Jacob was his antithesis, because he was a man of integrity. 54 The Hebrew ish tam is translated by J.P.S. as a quiet man. However, according to I.E., as Jacob was the antithesis of Esau, the deceiver, the term tam should be rendered as honest, sound, as in that man was whole-hearted (tam) and upright, and one that feared God (Job 1:1). They also differed in that Esau was a man of the field and Jacob a man dwelling in tents. It is possible that the meaning of dwelling in tents is like dwell in tents and have cattle (Gen. 4:20). 55 It does not meant that Jacob was a homebody, but that he was a keeper of herds and flocks. Jacob set up tents in order to be close to the flocks (Weiser).

Verse 28

BECAUSE HE DID EAT OF HIS VENISON. He brought him game to eat. 56 The Hebrew reads: ki tzayid be-fiv, literally, because game in his mouth. I.E. points out that the word me-vi (brought) has to be inserted into the text. The verse should be read as if written: he brought game into his mouth; i.e., he brought him game to eat.

Verse 29

AND HE WAS FAINT. Ayef 57 The word ayef (faint) may imply faint from exertion or faint from lack of food or water. Here it means the latter (Krinsky). However, Weiser maintains that I.E. holds that ayef applies only to faintness due to lack of food and water. (faint) means hungry and thirsty, as in be-eretz ayefah (in a weary land) (Is. 32:2). 58 A weary land is a land lacking in food and water.

Verse 30

LET ME SWALLOW. This is the only place in Scripture where the word, haliteni (let me swallow) is encountered. 59 Krinsky. Its meaning is feed me.
Nazid (pottage) means a cooked dish. However, va-yazed (sod) is an ayin vav. They are two roots with one meaning. 60 The root of nazid is nun, zayin, dalet. The root of va-yazid is zayin, vav, dalet. Both relate to cooking. The meaning of va-yazed ya'akov nazid is: And Jacob cooked a cooked dish. Yadon (shall abide) in My spirit shall not abide (yadon) (Gen. 6:3) and nedanah (the sheath thereof) (I Chron. 21:27) 61 See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 6:3. are similar.

Verse 31

SELL ME. Mikhrah (sell me) is vocalized with a chirik, 62 Mikhrah (sell me) is an elongated imperative, the usual imperative of sell being mekhor. The rule in Hebrew grammar is that when a word in the kal follows the efol, vocalization of its elongated imperative is written with a kamatz katan, i.e., zekhor (remember) is elongated like zokhrah (Neh. 5:19), and shemor (keep) to shomrah (Ps. 25:20). Hence mekhor should become mokhrah. I.E. points out that even though mekhor follows the efol conjugation, it is elongated as an efal. In the latter, the elongated imperative is vocalized with a chirik (Cherez). like shilchah (send) in Send (shilchah) the lad (Gen. 43:8) and shikhvah (lie) in Lie (shikhvah) with me (Gen. 39:7. 63 These words are conjugated in the efal and are thus vocalized with a chirik in the elongated imperative. The birthright

refers to the double share of the father's wealth which belongs to the first born. 64 Cf. Deut. 21:17. Others maintain that the first born is always superior to his younger siblings in that they must rise before him and serve him as a son serves his father. 65 In other words Jacob did not buy the birthright because he wanted a double share but because the birthright had honorary significance. I.E. offers this interpretation either because he believes that Isaac was poor at this time and the double share was insignificant, or because the law of the double share of the first-born took effect only after the revelation at Sinai.

Verse 32

[BEHOLD, I AM AT THE POINT TO DIE.] He was daily exposed to danger when he went out hunting, as an animal might kill him. Thus there was a possibility that he would predecease his father.

Verse 33

Verse 34

SO ESAU DESPISED. Esau also despised the birthright 66 The opening line of I.E. is difficult to comprehend. It literally reads: also this birthright because… Weiser, Filwarg, and Krinsky suggest that the text is corrupt. We have followed Filwarg's reconstruction since it involves adding only one letter, viz., emending gam zot (also this birthright) to gam baz et (he also despised the birthright). The point is that in addition to selling the birthright because he was weary, he also despised the birthright because his father had no wealth to leave him (Weiser). because he saw that his father had no wealth. Many are amazed at this because Abraham left Isaac a vast amount of money?" 67 Gen. 24:34, 37. Have they never seen a man very rich in his youth and poor in his old age? Proof that Isaac was poor is the fact that he loved Esau because of his need. 68 Cf. verse 28. The reading of Nachmanides is: because of his game (tzedo). The printed texts read: because of his need (tzorko). Had there been ample food in Isaac's house and Esau the honorable one in his father's sight, 69 Cf. Is. 43:4. he would not have sold his birthright for a dish of food. Furthermore, why did Isaac have to tell Esau, Bring me venison (Gen. 27:7), if he had savory meat at home for his daily meals? Additionally, why did Jacob not have choice garments 70 Gen. 27:15. and why didn't Rebekah give Jacob gold and silver for his journey (when he fled to Haran), seeing that Jacob was so poor that he had to say, "If God will…give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on" (Gen. 28:20). Also, why did Rebekah, who loved him so much, not send him money in view of the fact that he was so impoverished that he had to tend Laban's flock? As to the verse which states, And the man waxed great…And he had possessions of flocks, and possessions of herds, and a great household (Gen. 26:13, 14), it refers to the period prior to Isaac's old age. Now, those who are intellectually blind think that wealth is a great distinction for the righteous. However, the prophet Elijah shows that the opposite is the case. 71 I Kings 17:6, where Elijah's poverty is described. They further ask, why did God withhold wealth from Isaac? Let them tell us why God withheld sight from Isaac's eyes. Let them not put us off with a poor answer based upon a Midrashic homily, 72 The allusion is either to an aggada which ascribes Isaac's blindness to a curse put on him by Abimelech (Megillah 15a) or as a result of the incense which Esau's wives offered to the idols (Tanchuma 20:20). Additional Midrashic reasons for Isaac's blindness are quoted by Krinsky in his comments on Gen. 27:1. for there is a secret meaning in the matter 73 Either for

Isaac's blindness (Weiser, Krinsky) or to the Midrash (Filwarg). and we must not probe into it, for the thoughts of God are deep and beyond the ken of man. Similarly others say, behold Isaac had sheep, 74 If Isaac had sheep then he was not poor. The contradicts I.E.'s assertion that Isaac was poor. for Rebekah told Jacob, Go now to the flock (Gen. 27:9). However, it is possible that he had a few sheep remaining. It is also possible that Go now to the flock means go to the place where sheep are sold.

Chapter 26

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

AND KEPT MY CHARGE. Mishmarti (my charge) is a general term for all that Abraham was obligated to observe from the commandments (mitzvot), statutes (chukkim) and laws (torot). It is possible that the commandments spoken of in our verse refer to Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred etc. (Gen. 12:1), and Take now thy son…even Isaac…and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains etc. (Gen. 22:2). 1 I.E. explains that My commandments refers to Gen. 12:1 and Gen. 22:2, as these were commandments. Statutes pertain to Abraham's emulating God's ways and laws. It should be noted that I.E. explains chok to mean a logical law. This is in contradistinction to Rashi, who explains chukkim as irrational laws. I.E seems to imply that Abraham did not observe all the laws, statutes and commandments contained in the Torah. This is contrary to the Rabbinic sage Rav, who held that Abraham observed the entire Torah, as seen from the verse because that Abraham hearkened to My voice, and kept My charge etc. (Yoma 28b).
The statutes spoken of in our text pertain to the works of God that a man should uphold. These statutes are based on logic. 2 The point is that Abraham, before the revelation on Mt. Sinai, was able to ascertain God's statutes. I will elaborate on this term (chukkim) in my comments on the verse dealing with the prohibition of wearing a garment of two kinds of stuff mingled together (Lev. 19:19). The torot (laws) mentioned in our verse relate to Abraham's circumcision of himself, his children and his servants. I will fully explain the meaning of the terms torah and mitzvah in my comments on the verse and the law and the commandment (Ex. 24:12).

Verse 6

AND ISAAC DWELT IN GERAR. Isaac did as God had commanded him. 3 Sojourn in this land (v. 3).

Verse 7

OF HIS WIFE. The word le-ishto (of his wife) should be rendered: about his wife. 4 The lamed here means about. See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 20:13. Le-ishto might be rendered to his wife, hence I.E.'s comment. We find a similar meaning for this word in that men say not of me (li) (Jud. 9:54). 5 Here too the lamed means about. Thus li should be rendered about me, not to me.
FOR HE FEARED. Yare (he feared) is a perfect, 6 Yare can also be a participle, hence I.E.'s comment. as is the word zaken (old) in And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old (zaken) (Gen. 27:1). 7 Zaken can also be a participle. However, in this verse it cannot be so, for the verse opens with a perfect viz., va-yehi (and it came to pass). The words "because he said" have been omitted before lest the men of the place should kill me. 8 The verse reads: for he feared to say 'My wife:' lest the men of the place should kill me. According to I.E. this is an abridged verse and should be read as if written: for he feared to say my wife, "because he said" lest the men of this place, etc. We find this phrase similarly omitted in for God hath made me fruitful (Gen. 41:52). 9 It should be read: "because he said" for God hath made me fruitful.

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

A HUNDREDFOLD. The word sha'ar means the same as the Rabbinic term shi'ur (estimate, reckon). The meaning of me'ah she'arim (a hundredfold) is that Isaac was blessed in that the earth produced one hundred times more than what he sowed was estimated to produce. The word she'arim comes from the same root as sha'ar in For as one that hath reckoned (sha'ar) within himself (Prov. 23:7).

Verse 13

AND GREW. Ve-gadel (and grew) is a perfect. 10 The word grew is written twice in the second part of the sentence. The first time it is written gadel, the second time gadal. Hence I.E. points out that both are perfects and mean the same. I.E.'s comment is pertinent because gadel can also be a participle (Krinsky, Weiser).

Verse 14

AND A GREAT HOUSEHOLD. Isaac had man and maidservants to serve him. Avuddah (household) is an adjective. 11 The word avuddah is an adjective, with the noun which it is modifying missing. Scripture should have read:

adamah avuddah, ground worked by man and maidservants (Cherez, Weiser). I.E. interprets thus because the form avuddah looks like an adjective. On the other hand, it may be a noun following the paradigm of segullah (treasure). 12 A collective noun, following the paradigm of segullah, or kedushah, the point being we find nouns with this vocalization. Hence avuddah does not have to be an adjective. In this case the meaning of avuddah is simply servants, both male and female.

Verse 15

[WELLS.] When the word be'erot is in the construct it can be vocalized in one of two ways. 13 The word be'erot (wells) in our verse is in the absolute. In such cases it is always vocalized sheva, tzere, cholam. However, when in the construct it can either be vocalized sheva, tzere, cholam, as in verse 18, or segol, chataf segol, cholam as in Gen. 14:10.

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

LIVING WATER. Water that is always bursting forth.

Verse 20

ESEK. This word is not encountered elsewhere in Scripture. However, its meaning can be ascertained from Rabbinic literature. 14 The word esek in the Talmud means strife, cf. Bereshit Rabbah 8:5. It should be noted that in Rabbinic literature esek is spelled with a samech, in our verse with a sin.

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

DIGGED. Va-yikhru means digged. Kariti, in in my grave which I have digged (kariti) for me (Gen. 50:5); yikhreh in or if a man shall dig

(yikhreh) a pit (Ex. 21:33); and koreh, in whoso diggeth (koreh) a pit shall fall therein (Prov. 26:27), are similar. 15 They all come from the root caf, resh, heh and mean to dig.

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

BETWIXT US. Our verse contains two synonymous plurals in succession. 16 Our verse reads: Let there be an oath benotenu (betwixt us) benenu u-vennekha (even betwixt us and thee). I.E. points out that benotenu and benenu are both plurals from the same root and mean the same. However, they belong to different paradigms. These two forms were employed by Scripture to avoid redundancy (Weiser). According to Filwarg what I.E. is saying is that one of these phrases could have been left out since they mean the same; i.e., benotenu (betwixt us) means the same as benenu u-venekha (even betwixt us and thee) Scripture repeated itself for emphasis.

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

BEER-SHEBA. There were two reasons why the city was so called. 17 In Gen. 21:30 Abraham tells Abimelech, Verily, these seven ewe-lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that it may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. Scripture then adds, Wherefore that place was called Beer-Sheba because there they swore both of them. However, here we are told that Beersheba was so called because of the oath (shevu'ah) taken by Isaac and Abimelech (cf. Rashi). I.E. points out that Beersheba was so called because of the oaths taken by Abraham and Isaac. Or possibly the two reasons for the name are: Abraham's setting aside the seven (shevah) lambs and his oath (shevu'ah). Isaac merely repeated Abraham's oath (Weiser). Or Abraham called the place Beersheba because of the setting aside of the seven lambs and Isaac called it thus because of the oath (Cherez). On the other hand, it is possible that this Beersheba is not to be identified with the Beersheba previously mentioned (Gen. 21:28-31). 18 This would explain the two accounts for the name Beersheba in Scripture. According to this interpretation the two reasons given for Beersheba are

the two oaths, viz., Abraham's and Isaac's. Each took place in a different city.

Verse 34

JUDITH. Judith is a proper name. 19 Yehudit (Judith) can be taken to be an adjective, viz., Yehudi, hence I.E.'s comment (Krinsky). She did not bear Esau any children. 20 In chapter 36 Scripture lists Esau's wives and children. Judith is not mentioned. I.E. explains that this is due to the fact that Judith did not bear any children.
BASEMATH. Basemath is to be identified with Adah. 21 In our verse we read, Basemath, the daughter of Elon, the Hittite. However, in Gen. 36:2 we read, Adah, the daughter of Elon, the Hittite. I.E. explains the discrepancy by saying that she had two names. She had two names. There are hundreds of similar instances in Scripture. 22 See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 13:7 and 15:19.

Verse 35

A BITTERNESS OF SPIRIT. Each one of Esau's wives 23 And they were is in the plural; morat is a singular. Scripture should have used the plural morot. Hence I.E.'s comment. was a morat ru'ach (bitterness of spirit) to Isaac and Rebekah. Some say that morat (bitterness) is similar to the word moreh (rebellious) in If a man have a stubborn and rebellious (moreh) son (Deut. 21:18). 24 According to this interpretation the verse reads: and each one of them was rebellious (morat) against the wishes of (ru'ach) Isaac and Rebekah. However, I believe that morat comes from the same root as marah (bitter) in bitter (marah) as wormwood (Prov. 5:4). 25 According to this interpretation morat is not a verb meaning rebellious but a noun meaning bitter. The meaning of morat ru'ach is: they were a bitterness of the spirit; i.e., Isaac and Rebekah were displeased with having Canaanite daughters-in-law. In this case one does not have to interpret morat ru'ach as each one was a morat ru'ach, because it can be interpreted as both were a bitterness of spirit. Thus there is no problem with And they were being in the plural and morat ru'ach in the singular (Krinsky). Indeed, it is explicitly written, and Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan pleased not 26 The Hebrew literally reads: were evil in the eyes of Isaac his father; that is, Isaac did not like them. In other words, they were a bitterness of spirit to him because they were Canaanites, not because they rebelled against him. Isaac, his father (Gen. 28:8). The account of Esau's wives was recorded so that the Israelites would keep themselves from taking Canaanite women.

Chapter 27

Verse 1

Verse 2

BEHOLD NOW. The word na means now. 1 See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 12:11.

Verse 3

THY WEAPONS. Khelekha (thy weapons) is possibly a general term, the particulars being thy quiver and thy bow. 2 The verse should be understood as follows: take, I pray thee, thy weapons, namely thy quiver

and thy bow. Telyekha (thy quiver) is a sheath hanging 3 The root tav, lamed, heh means to hang. from its bearer wherein arrows are placed. On the other hand, khelekha may refer to a sword. 4 The translation follows the Vat. Ebr. 38 text. The printed texts have telyekha referring to a sword. If this reading is accepted, why does I.E. say a vav should have been placed before telyekha? The first particular following a general term does not require a vav, as I.E. himself implies in his comment on Gen. 26:5. Furthermore, why should a vav be placed before telyekha if it means a sword and not if it means a quiver? For an attempt to explain the printed texts see Krinsky and Cherez. However, for the impossibility of the printed versions see Filwarg. The reading of Vat. Ebr. 38 seems correct. However, in this case a conjunctive vav should have been placed in front of telyekha. 5 Since Scripture is listing three separate items, sword, quiver and bow, a conjunctive vav should be placed before quiver as it is before bow. The verse should read: take thy sword and thy quiver (ve-telyekha) and thy bow. Nevertheless, it does not refute the latter interpretation, for we find a similar instance in Adam, Seth, Enosh (I Chron. 1:1). 6 Here, too, we find three separate individuals listed without a vav before the final two. The text should have read: Adam and Seth and Enosh. We thus see that Scripture at times leaves out the conjunctive vav.

Verse 4

Verse 5

AND REBEKAH HEARD. Shoma'at (heard) should be translated, "was listening." 7 Shoma'at is a participle. It literally means listening. Hence, the word "was" has to be added and the verse should be understood: Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son.

Verse 6

Verse 7

BEFORE MY DEATH. Before I die. 8 The word li-fene (before) means in the presence of. It might conceivably be rendered immediately before (in the presence of) my death, hence I.E.'s comment. For the same reason Filwarg explains I.E.'s comment as meaning: while I yet live.

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

HAIRY. The word sa'ir means hairy. The opposite of sa'ir is chalak (smooth) (v. 11). Someone without hair on his body is possibly so called

(chalak) because all parts of his body (chalakav) are the same. 9 Chelek means a part, chalak one whose entire body appears to be one part. The idea is that a hairy person has some non-hairy parts on his body; hence his body is not all the same. The smooth man's skin is the same all over his body (Filwarg).

Verse 12

WILL FEEL ME. Yemusheni (will feel me) is similar to yesubeni (compasseth me about) 10 Yesubeni, too, has a root (samech, bet, bet) whose second and third letters are the same (Weiser). Yemusheni follows the paradigm of yesubeni (Cherez). (Ps. 49:6). It belongs to those roots whose second and third letters are the same. 11 The root of yemusheni root is mem, shin, shin.
AS A MOCKER. The root of ki-metate 'a (as a mocker) is doubled. 12 Its root is tav, ayin, heh. The heh drops out and the tav ayin are doubled making for a quadriliteral (Weiser, Cherez). It comes from the same root as to'eh (err). The meaning of ki-metate 'a is: as one who misleads his fellow man.

Verse 13

UPON ME BE THY CURSE. Don't be afraid that your father might curse you. If he does, the curse will be upon me, not on you. This is the way women talk. 13 A mother is willing to have any trouble that is destined to fall upon her son fall upon her. However, Saadiah Gaon explained Upon me be thy curse to mean: it is upon me to remove the curse. 14 I will intercede with your father to annul any imprecation that he may curse you with (Weiser).

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

[I AM.] Some say, Heaven forbid that a prophet should lie. We must therefore interpret Jacob's words to his father as follows: I am who I am and Esau is thy first born. 15 Cf. Rashi. "I am he who brings to you and Esau is your first born." Others say that Jacob quietly said, I am, and then loudly said, Esau is thy first-born. 16 Hence he said two things; I am; Esau is thy first born. Now these interpretations are nonsence. Prophets are divided into two groups. One group consists of God's messengers concerning commandments; 17 According to Weiser and Biblical

Encyclopedia (Heb.) Vol. 8, p. 678. An example of God's messengers with regard to commandments are Moses and Aaron. the other, those who foretell the future. If the latter have to say something that is not quite so, 18 A messenger who reveals God's laws never stretches the truth. Prophets who foretell the future occasionally do (Weiser and Biblical Encyclopedia). According to Filwarg, what I.E. says is that prophets do not lie when they act as God's messengers. At other times they may tell an untruth. there is no harm done. 19 It is no blight on the prophet's reputation qua prophet. However, a prophet whose task is to reveal commandments never lies. We thus find that King David, whom Scripture calls the man of God (II Chron. 8:14) and who said, The spirit of the Lord spoke by me (II Sam. 23:2), perverted the truth out of need of the hour when he spoke to Abimelech and said, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, when I came out, the vessels of the young men were holy (I Sam. 21:6). 20 When David asked for the holy bread, he had no young men with him. Cf. I Sam. 21 and Weiser. Also, the prophet Elisha did not speak the truth when he said to Hazael, Go, say unto him, thou shalt surely recover (II Kings 8:10), even though what he meant was, go say unto him that thou shalt recover from this illness; however, God has shown me that he will be killed. 21 II Kings 8:10 reads lo spelled with an alef. Thus the verse may be read: thou shalt not recover. However, the kere spells the lo with a vav meaning: say unto him thou shalt recover. I.E. points out that the kere is the correct meaning of the verse. Thus Elisha misled the king of Aram. He told him that he would live although he knew that he would be killed (Netter). For a description of the incident see II Kings 8:7-15. Similarly the prophet Micaiah uttered a vain prayer out of deference to King Ahab when he told him, Go up and prosper; and the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king (I Kings 22:15). 22 King Ahab inquired of the prophet if he would succeed in his attempt to regain Ramoth-Gilead from Aram. Cf. I Kings 22. Similarly Daniel said to King Nebuchadnezzar, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee (Dan. 4:16). 23 Nebuchadnezzar's dream signified that he would live as a beast for seven years. Since Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple the prophet could not really have meant that the events in the dream should fall on Nebuchadnezzar's enemies. Those who explain that My lord refers to God are indulging in Midrash. 24 According to the Talmud what Daniel really meant was: O Lord, may this dream fall upon your enemies, that is, Nebuchadnezzar. Cf. Shavuot 35b. Similarly Abraham said unto Abimelech, And moreover she is indeed my sister (Gen. 20:12); 25 See I. E. on this verse. and unto his young men, and I and the lad will go yonder and we will worship and come back to you (Gen. 22:5). 26 Since Abraham intended to offer Isaac as a burnt offering, he really was not telling the truth when he said, And I and the lad will…come back to you. AND EAT OF MY VENISON. Okhlah (eat) 27 Okhlah (eat) is an elongated imperative. The usual form is ekhol. Thus okhlah is similar to zokhrah which is also an elongated imperative. is similar to zokhrah (remember) 28 The normal imperative for remember is zekhor. in Remember (zokhrah) unto me, O my God, for good, all that I have done for this people (Neh. 5:19). The alef of okhlah is a root letter. 29 It is not the alef prefix of the first person imperfect. I.E. makes this point because in verse 25 the alef of okhelah is the alef prefix of the first person imperfect. See I.E.'s comment on verse 25 and the note to it.

Verse 20

Verse 21

THAT I MAY FEEL THEE. There is no dagesh in the shin of va-amushekha (that I may feel thee) in order to simplify the enunciation of this word. 30 The root of va-amushekha is mem, shin, shin. One of these shins is missing is va-amushekha. When a root letter is missing a dagesh is placed in one of the remaining root letters; thus we would expect a dagesh in the shin of va-amushekha. I.E. points out that since a dagesh doubles the letter in which it is placed, the verse would have to be pronounced va-amushshekha. The dagesh was left out to avoid this.

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

AND I WILL EAT OF MY SON'S VENISON. The alef of ve-okhelah (and I will eat) is a first person imperfect prefix. It is vocalized with a cholam to compensate for the missing alef of the root. 31 The root of akhal (eat) is alef, caf, lamed. The alef prefixed to a verb in the first person imperfect is usually vocalized with a segol. I.E. points out that in okhelah the alef is a first person imperfect prefix and is vocalized with a cholam rather than a segol to make up for the missing root letter. We find the same in the word omerah in I will say (omerah) unto God my Rock (Ps. 42:10). 32 The root of amar (say) is alef, mem, resh. In omerah the alef is the alef of the first person imperfect prefix and it, too, is vocalized with a cholam to make up for the missing alef root letter.
The nun of tevarakhanni (may bless me) (v. 19) receives a dagesh to make up for the missing nun 33 According to I.E. when a verb is combined with a pronominal suffix, a nun is added to the end of the root. Since ni is the sign of the first person pronominal suffix, tevarakhanni should have been spelled with two nuns (we have spelled it with two nuns because of the dagesh. In the Hebrew it has one nun). It should be noted that I.E.'s comment is misplaced as it pertains to verse 19. which should have been in our word, as we find in yesovevenhu (He compassed him about) (Deut. 32:10) and similarly in yeshacharuneni (they will seek Me) (Hos. 5:15). 34 In yesovevenhu we see that a nun is added to the root when a verb is combined with a pronominal suffix. In yeshacharuneni we see that when a verb is combined with a first person pronominal suffix, two nuns are added to the root.

Verse 26

Verse 27

[AND KISSED HIM.] When the word kiss is followed by a lamed it means to kiss upon the hand, shoulder or neck; when it is not followed by a lamed it indicates a mouth to mouth kiss. 35 I.E. offers no proof for this statement (Weiser).
AND HE SMELLED. The resh of va-yarach (and he smelled) is vocalized with a pattach because it precedes a gutteral. 36 Va-yarach is an ayin vav in

the hifil. Ayin vavs in the hifil are usually vocalized with a segol. Compare, va-yashev, va-yarem (Cherez). Va-yana (was moved) and va-yanach (and rested), in And his heart was moved (va-yana) (Is. 7:2) and and rested (va-yanach) in all the borders of Egypt (Ex. 10:14), 37 Va-yana and va-yanach are vocalized with pattachs because they end in gutturals, va-yana with an ayin, va-yanach with a chet. are similar. All of the above come from roots whose middle letter is a vav. 38 They are ayin vavs. Va-yarach comes from the root resh, vav, chet, va-yana from nun, vav, ayin and va-yanach from nun, vav, chet.
SEE. Isaac said this to himself. 39 So Weiser. Krinsky suggests that "see" is to be understood as perceive, since it is impossible to see smell. The garments gave off a pleasant odor when Isaac thought in his heart that it was Esau before him and that Esau had just come in from the field. 40 Part of Isaac's pleasant sensation was psychological. The garments gave off the scent of trees in blossom since it is possible that this episode took place in the first month. 41 The month of Nisan. Hence the trees were in bloom and the garments absorbed their scent and gave off the smell of the field.

Verse 28

[OF THE DEW.] The mem of mi-tal (of the dew) is also to be prefixed to mishmane (of the fat places). 42 According to I.E. the word for fat is mishman. The particle mem, which means from, is thus missing. The word should have read mi-mishmane, hence I.E.'s comment (Cherez). Shall I give my first-born for my transgression? (Micah 6:7) is similar. 43 There, too, the bets of be-alfe (with thousands) and be-rivevot (with ten thousands) are to be read as if prefixed to pishi (my transgression) and chattat (the sin of). Micah 6:7 reads, Will the Lord be pleased with thousands (be-alfe) of rams, With ten thousands (be-rivevot) of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression (pishi), The fruit of my body for the sin (chattat) of my soul. However, its literal reading is: Shall I give my first born my transgression, the fruit of my body, sin of my soul? This makes no sense. Hence I.E. points out that the bet of be-alfe is to be applied to pishi (my transgression) and that of be-rivevot to chattat (sin of). Thus pishi is to be translated, for my transgression (be-fishi) and chattat, for the sin of (be-chattat) (Weiser). Our verses are thus similar in that letters prefixed to one word also apply to other words.

Verse 29

THY BRETHREN. The children of the concubines. 44 Abraham's concubines (Gen. 25:6). I.E. interprets brethren in the sense of relatives (Weiser). Or I.E. assumed that Isaac had concubines.
THY MOTHER'S SONS. Esau and his children.
CURSED BE EVERYONE THAT CURSETH THEE. Each one of those that will curse you. 45 The verse literally reads: Those who curse you is cursed. Those who curse you (orerekha) is a plural, is cursed (arur) is a singular. Hence, I.E.'s explanation that a plural followed by a singular means each one of the plural (Weiser). But the righteous are secure as a young lion (Prov. 28:1) 46 The righteous is in the plural; will be secure is in the singular. The verse literally reads: And righteous people he will be secure as a young lion. I.E. interprets this: each one of the righteous will be as secure as a young lion. is similar. There are many other analogous expressions in Scripture. And blessed be everyone that blesseth thee is also similar. 47 Literally, and those who bless you (u-mevarakhekha, a plural) is blessed (barukh, a singular). It means each one of those who blesses you will be blessed.

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

WHO THEN IS HE. Mi efoh hu (who then is he?) should be interpreted as follows: who is he and where is he? 48 The phrase should be read as follows: mi hu (who is he) and efo hu (where is he). The hu following efoh also applies to mi (Krinsky, Cherez). Mi efo hu literally means who where is he. Hence I.E.'s comment. The word efoh (then) is made up of two words. 49 Efoh is made up of ayeh (where) and poh (here) (Weiser).
The vav of va-varakhehu (and have blessed him) is vocalized with a kamatz because va-avarakhehu is a perfect. Had the vav been vocalized with a pattach, then va-avarachehu would be an imperfect. 50 Avarakhehu means I will bless him. The vav vocalized with a kamatz is a vav conversive and changes I will bless him to I blessed him. If the vav were vocalized with a pattach it would be a connective vav, and va-avarakhehu would mean, and I will bless him.

Verse 34

Verse 35

WITH GUILE. He did not speak the truth.

Verse 36

IS NOT HE RIGHTLY. Ha-khi is to be rendered as truly. Ha-khi in Thou art truly (ha-chi) my brother (Gen. 29:15) is similar.
NAMED. Someone named him Jacob. 51 The subject of kara (named) is omitted. Hence kara should be rendered, someone named him. According to I.E. ha-khi kara shemo ya'akov (is he not rightly named Jacob) means, someone truly named him Jacob. Cf. Kimchi.
FOR HE HATH SUPPLANTED ME. Va-yakeveni (for he hath supplanted me) is to be rendered: for he hath deceived me. Ve-okbah (in subtlety) in But Jehu did it in subtlety (ve-okbah) (II Kings 10:19) is similar. 52 According to I.E. it should be translated: But Jehu acted with deceit. It is possible that it comes from the same root as akov (deceitful) in The heart is deceitful (akov) (Jer. 17:9). Akov is the opposite of mishor (straight). 53 Cf. Is. 40:4, ve-hayah he-akov le-mishor (and the rugged shall be made level). We thus see that akov is the opposite of mishor.
RESERVED A BLESSING FOR ME. Kept with yourself (etzlekha) a blessing for me. Atzalta (reserved) comes from the same root as ve-atzalti (and I will take) in And I will take (ve-atzalti) of the spirit which is upon thee (Num. 11:17). 54 Etzel means near. Ve-atzalti literally means: I will take from that which is near thee. Atzalta (reserved) means kept near you. Cf. I.E. on Num. 11:17.

Verse 37

BEHOLD, I HAVE MADE HIM THY LORD. Via my blessing. Similarly have I given to him (v. 33) also means I have verbally given. Some say that efo (then) spelled with an alef at the end is one word meaning now. 55 This comment is in contradiction to I.E.'s note on verse 33.

Verse 38

Verse 39

Verse 40

AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS WHEN THOU SHALT BREAK LOOSE. Tarid (thou shalt break loose) has the same meaning as tirdeh (thou shalt rule) (Lev. 25:43). However, tarid and tirdeh have different roots. 56 The root of tarid is resh, vav, dalet. The root of tirdeh is resh, dalet, heh. According to this interpretation tarid means thou shalt rule, and the meaning of And it shall come to pass when thou shalt rule is, when the time that thou shalt rule shall come (Weiser). Others say that tarid is similar to arid (I cry out) in I cry out (arid) in my complaint (Ps. 55:3). According to this interpretation the meaning of our clause is: and it shall come to pass when thou shalt cry out, then God will pity you. 57 According to this interpretation tarid means thou shalt cry out.
THAT THOU SHALT SHAKE HIS YOKE. U-farakto (that thou shalt shake) comes from the same root as mefarek (rent) in rent (mefarek) the mountains 58 Its root is peh, resh, kof. It means to break apart, to rend. Hence u-farakta (that thou shake) means that thou shalt break. (I Kings 19:11). The word mafrakto (his neck) (I Sam. 4:18) is derived from the same stem. 59 Mafrakto is derived from the verb meaning to break, i.e., for it is easily broken (Rabbi Solomon Ha-Kohen). These blessings present a number of great difficulties. If the blessings were prophecies how is it possible for Isaac not to know whom he was blessing? The wise men of our generation respond to this problem by explaining that when Jacob entered the room, God told him, "Bless this one." 60 The revelation did not include any name. However, if this was the case Isaac would have told Esau, "God commanded me to bless Jacob." 61 Rather than telling him, Thy brother came with guile, and hath taken away thy blessing (v. 35). Furthermore, if God told Isaac to bless Jacob, why did Isaac bless Esau because he cried? 62 The Bible implies that Isaac blessed Esau because he pitied him for having his blessing stolen by his brother. Others say that Isaac was no prophet and his blessings did not come to pass. 63 Isaac prophesied that Esau would be subservient to Jacob. We do not find it to be so. However, they are also mistaken. Scripture explicitly tells us, And the Lord appeared unto him (Isaac) (Gen. 26:2, 24). 64 The verse refers to the patriarchs. See I Chron. 16:13-22. Moreover, King David in referring to the patriarchs says, And do My prophets no harm (I Chron. 16:22). Others ask, what efficacy could there be in Isaac's blessings since he thought that he was blessing Esau? The truth of the matter is that Isaac was in doubt as to who was really before him. Indeed, he said, The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau (v. 22). What Isaac did was bless the one in his presence without regard to whether it was Esau or Jacob, the reason being that both were his sons. Some ask, how could God say (Gen. 25:23) And the elder shall serve the younger? Similarly how could Isaac say, and thou shalt serve thy brother (v. 40)? 65 When in fact we do not find that Esau was subservient to Jacob. Saadiah Gaon superficially answers this question by pointing to

Scripture's statement, And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the souls of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts…and went unto a land away from his brother Jacob (Gen. 36:6). 66 This shows that Esau was subservient to Jacob. However, the Gaon seems to have forgotten that the Bible relates, and (Jacob) bowed himself to the ground seven times until he came near to his brother (Esau) (Gen. 33:3). 67 Which clearly shows that Esau was not subservient to Jacob. It appears to me that the prophet's 68 Isaac. blessing was akin to a prayer, and God accepted his prayer, 69 A blessing does not take effect immediately. See Rashbam's commentary on Deut 7:12 (Krinsky). Thus Isaac's blessing was a blessing and not a prophecy. If it had been a prophecy he would have been directed by God whom to bless. for Isaac's prayer was mainly concerned with the offspring of Jacob and Esau. 70 And the latter were subject to the former. Those who have as yet not awakened from their foolish sleep think that we are in the exile of the Edomites (Esau). 71 This opinion identifies the Romans (hence Christianity) with the Edomites. If this is so, then how could Scripture say that Jacob would rule over Esau when in fact Esau destroyed the Temple, exiled the Jews and ruled over them? However, this is not so. Edom (Esau) was subject to Judah. 72 From the time of King David until the reign of King Jehoram. Scripture thus states, In his (Jehoram's) days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah (II Kings 8:20). 73 Which indicates that till that time Edom (Esau) was subject to Judah. We are also told that Joab 74 King David's general. cut off every male in Edom (I Kings 11:16). It is because of their subjugation to Judah that they rejoiced on the day of Judah's calamity 75 The day that Jerusalem was taken. and told the Babylonians, Raze it, raze it even to the foundations thereof (Ps. 137:7). The taunts of the Edomites on the day of Jerusalem's fall was harder for the Judeans to bear than the afflictions visited upon them by the Babylonians. This is also the meaning of Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom (Lam. 4:21), 76 A sarcastic statement Rejoice while you still are able to, for your happiness will not long endure. Indeed, the verse concludes, The cup shall pass over unto thee also; Thou shalt be drunken and shalt make thyself naked. and Neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction (Obad. 1:12). Also, Hyrcanus the elder 77 John Hyrcanus the Hasmonean. He ruled Judea from 135 to 104 B.C.E. He conquered the Edomites and forced them to embrace Judaism. made the Edomites (Esau's descendants) guard Jerusalem and had them circumcised. Also, in the days of Agrippa 78 Agrippa II, last king of the House of Herod. When the Jews revolted against Rome in 66 C.E. he went to Jerusalem and tried to restore calm. when Jerusalem was taken, 79 That is, during the Roman-Jewish War. troops of Edomites 80 During the Roman-Jewish War the Edomites came to the aid of the Jews. came to Judah's aid. 81 Thus it is clear that the Romans are not to be identified with the Edomites. The Romans 82 Some printed editions read, the nation. who exiled us are from the seed of Kittim. Onkelos similarly explains Kittim to mean Rome in But ships shall come from the coast of Kittim (Num. 24:24). 83 Onkelos renders Kittim as Rome. The Kittim are the very kingdom of the Greeks as I have explained in my commentary on the Book of Daniel. 84 See I.E.'s comments on Dan. 2:38 and 37:14. [At first 85 I.E. goes on to explain why the Romans are referred to as Edomites. there were only a few people who believed in the man that was made into a god. The Romans accepted the belief in this man in the days of Constantine who introduced this new religion to the Romans upon the advice of an Edomite priest and placed upon his flag an image of this man. At that time there was no one in the world aside from a small group of Edomites who followed the new religion. 86 This is the reading of Vat. Ebr. 38. It was removed by the censor and does not appear in the Mikra'ot Gedolot edition. Some of the printed editions read; "At first there were only a few people who believed in the new religion. When the Romans accepted the new religion

in the days of Constantine who adopted it as the state religion there was no one in the world who kept the new religion except for the Edomites."] Similarly the contemporary inhabitants of Egypt, Sheba 87 An allusion to the Moslems living in the vicinity of the Red Sea (Weiser). and the land of Elam 88 An allusion to the Moslems in Mesopotamia (Weiser). are called Ishmaelites even though only a tiny minority of the people living there are true decendants of the Ishmaelites. 89 The people of these places are called Ishmaelites because they accepted the religion of the Ishmaelites (Islam).

Verse 41

AND ESAU HATED. Va-yistom (and he hated) is to be rendered: and he harbored hatred. Va-yistemuhu (and hated him) (Gen. 49:23) is similar. AND ESAU SAID IN HIS HEART. It is possible that Esau confided this thought to one of his friends. 90 Otherwise how could Rebekah know that Esau plotted to kill Jacob? Others say that Rebekah knew this through prophecy. 91 Hence she knew that Esau planned to kill Jacob after Isaac's death. The first interpretation appears correct.

Verse 42

DOTH COMFORT HIMSELF. Mitnachem (doth comfort himself) comes from the same root as nechamah (consolation). 92 It comes from the root nun, chet, mem and thus means to comfort or console. The meaning of our clause is: Esau's sole consolation is that he will be able to kill you. However, the Gaon says that mitnachem means to set a time and is similar in meaning to the Arabic wa'ad. 93 Which may mean to set a time. The phrase should thus be rendered: Esau doth set a time to kill you. This interpretation is problematic. For the problems inherent in it, see Weiser's notes on I.E.'s comments on Gen. 6:6.

Verse 43

Verse 44

A FEW DAYS. Yamim achadim (a few days) is to be translated as a few years. Compare yamim in for a full year (yamim) shall he have the right of redemption (Lev. 25:29). Achadim (a few) means less than ten. 94 Echad means one, achadim is its plural. Thus achadim can refer to any number up to ten.

Verse 45

WHY SHOULD I BE BEREAVED. Rebekah was anxious lest they kill each other, 95 Hence Rebekah's statement, why should I be bereaved of you both in one day. or that Esau would be killed for murdering Jacob. There is a Midrashic opinion that both Jacob and Esau died in one day. 96 Thus her words came true.

Verse 46

I AM WEARY OF MY LIFE. Katzti (I am weary) has the same meaning as tzakti (I am distressed). 97 I.E. literally reads: katzti is similar to its opposite ; that is, katzti is similar to tzakti, the kof and tzadi changing places. Thus the root kof, vav, tzadi has the same meaning as the root tzadi, vav, kof. Compare U-nekitzennah (and vex it) in Let us go up against Judah and vex it (u-nekitzennah) (Is. 7:6). Scripture

similarly says, the land whose two kings thou hast cast a horror of (katz) 98 That is, the land which causes you distress (Weiser). shall be foresaken (Is. 7:16).

Chapter 28

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

[SO ESAU WENT UNTO ISHMAEL.] When Esau learned that Isaac blessed Jacob a second time and charged him not to take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, 1 Verse 1. This comment forms the conclusion of I.E.'s notes on Gen 27:46. he went unto his uncle Ishmael and married his daughter Basemath, who was also called Mahalath. 2 Our verse tells us that Esau married Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael. However, Gen. 36:3 tells us that Esau married Basemath, Ishmael's daughter. I.E. solves the discrepancy by explaining that the daughter of Ishmael whom Esau married had two names. She, like Jethro, had two names, for I believe that Jethro and Hobab are one and the same person. 3 Cf. Ex. 18:1, and Num. 10:29. In the former, Moses' father-in-law is called Jethro, in the latter, by the name Hobab. In his comments on Ex. 2:18, I.E. says that they refer to one and the same person, as he had two names.
THE SISTER OF NEBAIOTH. He was the most important of all his brothers. 4 Therefore Mahalath is identified as the sister of Nebaioth. It is also possible that Ishmael had many wives and that Mahalath was Nabaioth's sister from the same mother. 5 Sister here means sister from the same mother. Hence Scripture tells us that Mahalath was the sister of

Nabaioth. The Bible mentions one wife of Ishmael (Gen. 21:21). Hence I.E.'s uncertainty.

Verse 10

[AND JACOB WENT OUT FROM BEER-SHEBA.] Saadiah Gaon is of the opinion that va-yelekh charanah (and went toward Haran) is to be interpreted as, to go to Haran. 6 Verse 10 literally reads: And Jacob went out of Beersheba and went to Haran. The verse thus tells us that Jacob arrived in Haran. If this is the case, why then do the verses that follow tell us what happened to Jacob on the way to Haran? Saadiah solves the problem by claiming that the Bible employs a perfect (va-yelekh) in place of an infinitive (la-lekhet), with the perfect having the meaning of an infinitive. Saadiah thus translates our verse: Jacob went out of Beersheba to go to Haran. However, this is not so. Va-yelekh charanah is to be interpreted literally. 7 That is, and he went to Haran. After telling us that Jacob left Beersheba and went to Haran, Scripture returns and tells us what he encountered on the way to Haran. 8 In other words, verse 10 is a general statement The particulars then follow. Jacob did not arrive in Haran on the day he left Beersheba, 9 Contrary to the Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 68:9 which states that Jacob arrived in Haran on the same day that he left Beersheba. because Scripture explicitly tells us that he spent a night on the way.

Verse 11

[AND HE LIGHTED UPON THE PLACE.] The reason the bet of ba-makom (the place) 10 There is a difference between be-makom and ba-makom. The former means in a place, the latter, in the place. "The place" implies a specific, well known place. When Jacob came to Beth-el there was as yet nothing significant about the place. Why then does Scripture say that Jacob alighted upon the place? is vocalized with a pattach is that Moses in writing the Torah did so in order to indicate the place that was well known in his time. 11 I.E. suggests that after this incident Beth-el was "the place" and Moses wrote accordingly. Similarly the prophet Hosea said, And there (at Beth-el) he would speak with us (Hos. 12:5). 12 We thus see that from the days of Moses onward, Beth-el was known as a holy place (Netter). Hosea said this because he prophesied in Beth-el concerning Jeroboam the son of Joash. 13 Hosea prophesied there because Beth-el was known as a holy place where an angel appeared to Jacob (Weiser). Cf. I.E. on Hos. 12:5. It was for the same reason that King Jeroboam set up a royal shrine there. Cf. Am. 7:13, Beth-el…is the king's sanctuary and it is a royal house. Hosea used the term "with us" because Amos, too, prophesied in Bethel. 14 Cf. Am. 7:13. It is clear from the Book of Amos that Beth-el was a holy place. According to the plain meaning of the text, va-yifga (and he lighted) is not to be translated as, and he prayed, as in neither make intercession (tifga) to Me (Jer. 7:16), 15 Our verse reads: va-yifga ba-makom (and he lighted upon the place). The Talmud states that va-yifga means, and he prayed (Berakhot. 26b; Ta'anit 7b; Sotah 14a; Sanhedrin 95b). According to I.E., if va-yifga is interpreted as, and he prayed, ba-makom must be interpreted to mean God. However, this is not necessarily so. Indeed, the Talmud interprets va-yifga ba-makom to mean, he prayed in the place. because we never find in the entire Bible the word makom (place) meaning God. 16 The Rabbinic sages refer to God as Ha-makom. I.E. points out that this a Rabbinic not a Biblical term for God. Hence va-yifga ba-makom cannot be translated as, and he prayed to God, and va-yifga cannot be rendered, and he prayed. Do not pay any attention to the Midrashic interpretation that explains makom, in makom acher (Es. 4:14), as referring to God, 17 The Book of Esther does not mention God. In his introduction to Esther I.E.

quotes an opinion that God is mentioned in this book in 4:14. I. E. rejects this interpretation as being Midrashic. because it most certainly does not. Proof of this is found in the word acher (another) which follows makom. 18 For then Es. 4:14 would read: then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another God (mi-makom acher), an impossible rendition.
OF THE STONES OF THE PLACE. Its meaning is: one of the stones of the place. 19 "Of the stones" can be taken to mean that Jacob took a number of stones. However, verse 18 indicates that it was one stone (Cherez).
UNDER HIS HEAD. Me-ra'ashotav (under his head) is a plural. 20 It is a plural having a singular meaning. This is so because this form does not appear in the singular (Weiser). It is similar to margelotav (his feet) (Ruth 3:4; 14). 21 This form does not appear in the singular; the plural is used for singular and plural. It is surprising that Rabbi Samuel Ben Hofni confused the dreams of common men with prophetic dreams. 22 Cf. I.E.'s introduction to the Pentateuch where he notes that Rabbi Samuel ben Hofni, in commenting on this verse, wrote on dream interpretation. Rabbi Samuel thus treated this dream as non-prophetic and interpreted it along those lines (Cherez).

Verse 12

[AND HE DREAMED, AND BEHOLD A LADDER SET UP ON THE EARTH.] Those who say that the ladder seen by Jacob refers to a statue, 23 Rearranging the letters of sulam (ladder) gives us semel (statue). According to the Midrash God showed Jacob the statue that Nebuchadnezzar would erect and the statue that King Manasseh would erect and place in the Temple. Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 68: 19-21. or that it refers to Sinai because it is numerically equivalent to it, 24 Both sulam and Sinai are numerically equivalent to 130. According to this interpretation it was prophetically shown that Jacob's descendants would receive the Torah at Sinai. Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 68:16. are indulging in Midrash. Rabbi Solomon ibn Gabirol, the Spaniard, says that Jacob's "ladder" alludes to man's heavenly soul, 25 For Ibn Gabirol's concept of the human soul, see P.D. Bookstaber, The Idea of Development of the Soul in Medieval Jewish Philosophy, p. 39. and that "the angels of God" signify thoughts of wisdom. 26 See I.E.'s introduction to his commentary on the Torah, "man's intelligence is the angel which mediates between him and his God." Rabbi Joshua 27 A Karaite scholar. See note 15 to I.E.'s introduction to his commentary on the Pentateuch. Vat. Ebr. 38 does not have the title rabbi prefixed to Joshua. It appears that Vat. Ebr. 38 is correct, as it is highly unlikely that I.E. would call a Karaite scholar rabbi. The title rabbi was probably inserted by a scribe who was unaware that the reference is to a Karaite. Some of the editions omit Joshua's interpretation in totto. explains the dream of the ladder to mean that Jacob's prayers ascended the Heavens via the ladder and in response to his supplications salvation was sent down to him. These commentators have apparently not studied 28 A sarcastic barb. The scholars with whom I.E. takes issue obviously did study the prophets. the prophecies of Zechariah, Amos and Jeremiah. 29 The point is that the prophets spoke in parables. Cf. Zech. 1:4-11; 4; 5; 6; Am. 7:1-9, 8:1-2, 9:1; Jer. 1. The way to interpret Jacob's dream is to view it as a parable. It teaches that nothing is hidden from God and that what happens below is contingent on the decree from above. 30 It is hard to understand I.E.'s point. The other commentators also interpret the vision as a parable. It thus appears that I.E.'s main argument is from the Book of Zechariah which speaks of God sending angels to roam the earth. Amos and Jeremiah are mentioned for purposes of embellishment. There is thus, as it were, a ladder linking heaven and earth by which angels ascend to inform God what they have seen on earth after going over it. Scripture also states that

other angels come down to fulfill God's commands. The imagery presented is that of a king and his servants. 31 According to Filwarg the reference is to verse 12. According to Krinsky the reference is to Zech. 6:7.

Verse 13

Verse 14

AND THOU SHALT SPREAD ABROAD. U-faratzta (and thou shalt spread abroad) is to be rendered: and thou shalt multiply. Va-yifrotz ha-ish (and the man increased) is similar (Gen. 30:43).

Verse 15

Verse 16

SURELY THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE. The meaning of Jacob's statement is that there are places where miracles are seen. 32 The point is that there are some places where God's presence is more manifest than in others. Cf. I.E.'s comments on Ex. 25:40. I cannot explain why this is so because it is a deep mystery. 33 It is beyond human comprehension (Weiser). Levine (Introduction to Vat. Ebr. 38) suggests that when I.E. says, I cannot explain, he means, I am not permitted to explain.

Verse 17

THIS IS NONE OTHER THAN THE HOUSE OF GOD. This is a chosen place where a man in time of need will pray and his supplications will be accepted. Many ask, how could Jacob set up a pillar? 34 Deut. 16:22 prohibits setting up a pillar. However, they have forgotten that Moses set up twelve pillars. 35 Ex. 24:4. Scripture does not prohibit a pillar set up to honor the Lord. Scripture merely states, Neither shalt thou set thee up a pillar, which the Lord thy God hateth (Deut. 16:22). I will explain the latter verse when I come to it. 36 Ibn Ezra on Deut. 16:22 explains that Scripture only prohibits A pillar which the Lord…hateth, i.e., a pillar set up to an idol.

Verse 18

AND POURED OIL UPON THE TOP OF IT. So that he would recognize it when he returned.

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

[THEN SHALL THE LORD BE MY GOD.] The Lord that shall be my God is the One known by the Tetragrammaton. Scripture clearly states, And, behold the Lord (spelled with the tetragramaton) stood beside him (v. 13). You will

find an explanation of this name of God in my comments on the first Torah portion of Exodus. 37 Cf. I.E.'s comments to Ex. 3:15.

Verse 22

[GOD'S HOUSE.] The meaning of shall be God's House is: it will be a fixed place for my prayers and for my tithing; for out of all the money that thou shalt give me, I will give a tithe out of respect for God to one who is fit to receive it. 38 Such as Melchizedek. Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 14:20. Those who say that the tithe refers to Levi 39 According to the Midrash Jacob set aside his son Levi as a tithe to God. Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 70:7 and Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer, Chap. 37. are indulging in Midrash. This is so because we do not find anywhere in the Torah that a man shall tithe his children. The only tithes that we find in the Pentateuch are cattle, sheep and produce.

Chapter 29

Verse 1

Verse 2

AND HE LOOKED. Va-yar (and he looked) 1 From the root resh, alef, heh, meaning to see. is an irregular form, for though a kal, its yod is vocalized with a pattach notwithstanding the fact that it is not followed by a guttural, in which case the preceding letter is normally vocalized with a pattach. 2 Compare, va-ya'al (and he went up) from the root ayin, lamed, heh ; va-ya'as (and he made) from the root ayin, sin, heh. Furthermore, this form (va-yar) cannot drop the conversive vav 3 One cannot say yar. nor come with any conjugational prefix but the yod. 4 One says, va-ere (and I saw), va-tere (and you saw), va-nere (and we saw). One does not say, va-ar, va-tar, va-nar. Thus va-yar is not vocalized like the rest of the forms in its conjugational paradigm wherein the prefixes are vocalized with a tzere rather than a pattach. I believe that when one wants to conjugate the root resh, alef, heh in the third person according to the paradigm of va-yishb in and took some of them captive (va-yishb) (Num. 21:1), 5 The root of va-yishb is shin, bet, heh. The third person masculine perfect of this form is yishbeh, with a vav conversive, va-yishbeh ; in the shortened form, va-yishb. Similarly va-yar is short for va-yireh. the heh would be dropped 6 As in all cases of the abridged form. and the alef unsounded. 7 In va-yishb the second root letter receives a sheva, however, this cannot be done in va-yar as the alef cannot receive a sheva. Nevertheless, the chirik would remain beneath the yod. 8 As in va-yishb. The word would thus be pronounced va-yir and it would follow the paradigm of va-yif 9 From the root yod, peh, heh. (thus was it fair) in va-yif be-godlo (thus was it fair in its greatness) (Ez. 31:7) and would be thought to mean, and he threw, from the root yod, resh, heh (throw). To avoid this possibility our word (va-yar) is vocalized with a pattach beneath the yod.

Verse 3

AND THEY ROLLED THE STONE. The shepherds rolled the stone. 10 The verse reads: And thither were all the flocks gathered; and they rolled the stone. And they rolled appears to refer to the flocks. However, this is

impossible; hence I.E. points out that the subject (shepherds) is missing in the verse. The verse is thus abridged (Filwarg).

Verse 4

WHENCE. Me-ayin (whence) means what place are you from. The word ayin without the mem prefixed to it could not be used for whence, for ayin means nothing. 11 Ayin means nothing; me-ayin whence. Nevertheless, we find the word me-ayin also used for nothing, as in Behold, ye are nothing (me-ayin) (Is. 41:24).

Verse 5

Verse 6

AND, BEHOLD, RACHEL HIS DAUGHTER COMETH. The accent is on the last syllable in the word ba'ah (cometh) because it is a participle. It is similar to words in the po'el form. 12 Po'el is the participle form of whole roots (shelamim) in the kal. The term used by I.E. for participle is shem to'ar, which literally means adjective. I.E. is of the opinion that all participles are also adjectives (Weiser). For an explanation of the participle in Biblical Hebrew, see Biblical Hebrew by R.K. Harrison. Filwarg renders this passage: " ba'ah is an adjective, adjectives having the same meaning in Hebrew as participles."

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

RACHEL CAME. Ba'ah (came) is pentultimately accented. It is a verb in the perfect.

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

AND JACOB TOLD RACHEL. And Jacob told Rachel should have been written before And Jacob kissed Rachel (v. 11). Its meaning is: And Jacob had already told Rachel that he was her father's brother before he kissed her. 13 He would not have kissed her before this (Filwarg). Hence And Jacob said is a pluperfect. There are many such instances in Scripture. 14 See I.E. comments on Gen. 1:9; 2:8.

Verse 13

ALL THESE THINGS. The account of the blessings. 15 That his father blessed him and on account of this he was forced to flee from his brother's wrath (Weiser).

Verse 14

THE SPACE OF A MONTH. I have already explained the meaning of chodesh yamin (the space of a month). 16 According to I.E. it means a full month. Cf. I.E.'s comments to Gen. 4:4.

Verse 15

THY WAGES. Maskurtekha (thy wages) follows the paradigm of matkonet in And the tale (matkonet) of the bricks (Ex. 5:8). 17 Matkonet with the second person pronominal suffix is matkuntekha ; i.e., the cholem changes to a kubbutz when pronominal suffixes are added to matkonet. The same is true with maskoret. Also, like matkonet, a tav is added to the root (Krinsky).

Verse 16

Verse 17

WEAK. Rakkot is to be taken literally. 18 It means weak (Krinsky, Weiser). Some ask, why were Leah's eyes weak? They raise this question because they believe God's thoughts are like their thoughts, 19 A play on Is. 55:8. and they think that all people have to be formed alike. 20 Hence they ask, why were Leah's eyes different? I.E. obviously disagreed with the Midrashic interpretation to the effect that Leah's eyes were weak from crying because she had been told that she was destined to marry Esau. Cf. Baba Batrah 123a; Bereshit Rabbah 70:16; 71:2. Ben Efraim said that an alef is missing in the word rakkot (weak), its meaning being arukhot (long). 21 In other words rakkot is short for arukhot. Arukhot minus the alef spells rakkot. However, Ben Efraim himself was missing an alef. 22 Efraim minus the alef spells parim (cows). Aluf also means wisdom. Perhaps I.E. means Efraim lacked wisdom (Krinsky, Weiser).
OF BEAUTIFUL FORM. To'ar (form) is similar to ta'ar (drawn) in And the border was drawn (ve-ta'ar) (Jos. 15:9). The meaning of beautiful form is that each organ of her body such as her nose and mouth were beautifully drawn (formed).
[AND FAIR TO LOOK UPON.] Her whole body was fair to look upon, 23 According to I.E. to'ar refers to the shape of the individual body parts and mareh to the body as a whole. or And fair to look upon refers to the complexion of her face. 24 This is also Rashi's opinion.

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

AND JACOB SERVED SEVEN YEARS FOR RACHEL. Be-rachel (for Rachel) should be rendered because of Rachel. 25 The prefix bet usually means in.

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

FULFILL THE WEEK OF THIS ONE. The seven days of the marriage feast. Zot (this one) refers to Leah. 26 The Hebrew reads shevu'a zot. One might think that zot refers to shevu 'a, i.e., fulfill this week; hence I.E.'s comment that zot refers to Leah. The reason for the preceding is that shevu 'a is vocalized with a sheva ; hence it is in the construct with zot, i.e., the week of this one. If it meant this week it should have read: shavu'a zot. Furthermore, the Hebrew word for week is masculine; if the Bible wanted to say this week it would have read shavu'a zeh since zot is feminine (Krinsky).

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

WILL LOVE ME. Ye'ehavani (will love me) is vocalized with a pattach 27 Rather than with a tzere. In such forms the last root letter is vocalized with a tzere ; compare, yishmereni. Hence I.E.'s comment that there are exceptions. beneath the bet. It is similar to tidbakani (overtake me) in lest the evil overtake me (tidbakani) (Gen. 19:19).

Verse 33

Verse 34

WILL MY HUSBAND BE JOINED UNTO ME. Yillaveh (will be joined) is similar to ve-nilvu (and they shall be joined) in And they shall be joined (ve-nilvu) unto thee 28 That is, yillaveh comes from the root lamed, vav, heh, meaning to join. Hence, yillaveh means will be joined. (Num. 18:4).

Verse 35

THIS TIME WILL I PRAISE THE LORD. Ha-pa'am 29 Ha-pa'am literally means the time, which makes no sense, hence I.E.'s comment that ha-pa'am is short for ha-pa'am ha-zot. should be explained as if written ha-pa'am ha-zot (this time). Its meaning is, now that I have four sons I will give thanks to the Lord for I will not desire any more children. One can paraphrase This time will I praise the Lord by: I will praise the Lord because he has given me all this and has satisfied me. Therefore she left off bearing. 30 God punished her by having her leave off from bearing for saying this (Krinsky). It was only after Leah prayed to God for children (Gen. 30:17) that she conceived again.

Chapter 30

Verse 1

GIVE ME CHILDREN. Pray to God as your father did. 1 Pray to God as your father did when your mother could not conceive. Cf. Gen. 25:21. This is what Rachel meant by give me children. Rashi explains similarly.

Verse 2

AM I IN GOD'S STEAD. Am I in God's place. It is possible that Jacob prayed on behalf of Rachel but the time for the acceptance of his prayer on her behalf had not yet arrived.

Verse 3

AND I ALSO MAY BE BUILDED UP. I have explained the word ve-ibbaneh (and I also may be builded up) in my comments on Sarah's use of the same term. 2 See I.E.'s commentary on Gen. 16:2.

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

JUDGED ME. The second nun of dananni (judged me) has a dagesh to compensate for a missing suffixal nun. 3 The suffix "me" is sometimes written with two nuns (nni). To make up for this missing nun a dagesh is placed in the suffix ni (Filwarg).

Verse 7

Verse 8

WRESTLINGS. Naftule (wrestlings) is a noun in the nifal. 4 It is a noun from the root peh, tav, lamed following a nifal paradigm. From this root we get the verb niftalti (I wrestled). The same is the case with the proper name Naphtali (Weiser). Krinsky and Cherez maintain that what I.E. means is that naphtali is an infinitive. Its meaning is I strove, as a man who, when wrestling 5 Naftulai thus means twistings of (Weiser). I.E. uses twistings in a specific sense, twisting while fighting. with another, twists (yiftol) in his effort to overpower his opponent in order to throw him to the ground. 6 The point is that Rachel did not actually wrestle with her sister. She strove with her with the determination of a person trying to overpower his opponent. However, the literal meaning of naftule is twistings (wrestlings). The word tittappal (Thou dost deal tortuously) (II Sam. 22:27) is similar. 7 The point of the verse is that God deals with a person measure for measure, viz., With the pure Thou dost show thyself pure, And with the twisted (ikkesh) Thou dost deal tortuously (tittappal). In the latter verse tittappal (tortuously) is parallel to ikkesh (twisted). Hence tittappal implies crookedness or twisting. Tittappal is a variation of titpattal (Kimchi), and Ps. 18:27 which has the identical theme reads titpattal. Thus it seems that the root peh, tav, lamed and its variation tav, peh, lamed mean to twist (Weiser). The reason Rachel mentioned God, (naftule Elohim), 8 Naftule Elohim, wrestlings of God. is either that out of respect for the Lord she had given her handmaiden to her husband, 9 Naftule Elohim (with mighty wrestlings) is to be rendered: Godly wrestlings. or that God helped her in her struggle. 10 According to this interpretation naftule Elohim means wrestlings with God’s help.

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

FORTUNE IS COME. Bagad (fortune is come) is really two words 11 It is a combination of two words ba (spelled bet, alef) and gad (Weiser). Thus, bagad is spelled bet, gimel, doled. Hence the alef of ba has been dropped. with the alef missing. Similarly, bavel. 12 This is the reading in Vat. Ebr. 38 and many of the printed editions. Some editions read ba-kol. The latter is incorrect (Filwarg, Weiser). See I.E.’s comments on Gen. 11:9. Also, bamah as is clearly explained in Ezekiel (20:29).
The meaning of Gad is a troop. Leah said this because she now had a “troop” of sons. 13 Bagad thus means: a troop has come. Others say that gad means good fortune as in the Arabic; and that prepare a table for Fortune (gad) (Is. 65:11), with the latter meaning Jupiter, 14 Jupiter was believed to control men’s fortune. Cf. I.E.’s commentary on Is. 65:11. This proves that Gad means Fortune, and bagad, Fortune has come. is similar. Actually, however, gad in the latter verse refers to the troops of heaven. 15 The stars and planets. Therefore, Is. 65:11 does not contradict I.E.’s interpretation that bagad means a troop has come.

Verse 12

Verse 13

HAPPY AM I. Be-oshri means, on account of my happiness. 16 The bet of be-oshri is the bet ha-sibbah (Weiser). Filwarg renders it: so that I may be called happy, the thought expressed by our verse being, this one was born so that the women may praise me by calling me happy (for the daughters will call me happy).

Verse 14

MANDRAKES. Onkelos renders dudaim yavruchin (Aramaic for mandrakes). They are similarly called in Arabic. Mandrakes give off a pleasant scent. Thus it is written, The mandrakes give forth fragrance (Cant. 7:14). The mandrakes are shaped like humans. They have the shape of a head and hands. 17 The roots of the mandrakes have this shape (Nahmanides). I do not know how they can help a woman conceive since their nature is cold. 18 According to medieval medical theory there are four humors, hot, cold, moist and dry. The body was believed to function according to the balance of these four humors. The humor that was hot was thought to stimulate sexual activity and cold to depress it Cf. Maimonides, Guide To the Perplexed, Part I, Chap. 34.

Verse 15

FOR THY SON'S MANDRAKES. Tachet (for) is to be rendered: in place of and as a reward for. 19 The primary meaning of tachet (for) is beneath. However, this translation does not fit here, hence I.E.'s comments: that tachet is here to be rendered in place of and as a reward for (thy son's mandrakes).

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

GOD HATH ENDOWED ME. The meaning of zevadani (hath endowed me) is: has given me a portion. The word zevadani is not found elsewhere in Scripture. 20 Hence its meaning can only be ascertained from the context. WILL DWELL WITH ME. Yizbeleni means will dwell with me; 21 The ni suffix at the end of a verse stands for oti. Hence yizbeleni should be translated: will dwell me, an impossible construction. Therefore I.E. points out that ni here does not have the meaning of oti (me) but immi

(with me). Since the suffix ni means oti (me), it is usually combined only with a transitive verb, compare, zevadani (endowed me); hikkani (smite me), yahargeni (will kill me) and others (Weiser). i.e., his dwelling (zevulo) will always be with me. Compare, I have surely built Thee a house of habitation (bet zevul) (I Kings 8:13). Yetza'uni (are gone forth from me), in banai yetza'uni (my children are gone from me) (Jer. 10:20), and vi-yevo'uni (also come unto me) (Ps. 119:41) are similar. All of these are intransitive verbs with the pronominal suffix ni.

Verse 21

AND AFTERWARDS SHE BORE A DAUGHTER. Some say that Dinah was Zebulun's twin. 22 The Bible omits "and she conceived" with regard to Dinah (Weiser). "And afterwards she bore a daughter" implies one birth (Kimchi).

Verse 22

Verse 23

GOD HATH TAKEN AWAY MY REPROACH. Asaf (taken away) is to be rendered cut off. Compare, And gladness and joy are taken away (ve-ne'esaf) (Is. 16:10). Others interpret what Rachel said as, God saw the insults which the women hurled at me because I was barren and by giving me a son He, as it were, gathered (asaf) and collected the insults. 23 According to this interpretation asaf means gathered rather than cut off. It is clear from Scripture that Jacob's twelve children were born in seven years. 24 Cf. Seder Olam 2, "Jacob spent 20 years in Laban's house. Seven before marrying the matriarchs, and seven after marrying them and six years after the birth of the eleven tribes and Dinah. We thus find that the tribes with the exception of Benjamin were born in seven years, each one every seven months." That is, six months and some days (Weiser). The point is that Jacob had acquired eleven sons and Dinah by the time he had finished serving his 14 years for his wives (v. 25). The first seven years he had no wife (v. 20). Hence all his children, with the exception of Benjamin who was born after he had left Laban, were born during seven years. When the ancients numbered them they could only explain how this was possible by saying that each was born six months and some days after conception. 25 Scripture tells us that Jacob's children were born in sequence; Reuben, Simon, Levi, etc. Since Jacob had twelve children in seven years, he had to have had a child every seven months since there are 84 months in seven years and 84 divided by 12 is 7. The reason I.E. says that Jacob's sons were born six months and some days following conception is to allow for the days of "uncleanliness" following childbirth during which Jacob abstained from intercourse with those wives who conceived twice in one year (cf. Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer, Chap. 36). The Seder Olam quoted above employs a round number (Cherez). However, this was not necessarily so. It is posssible that Leah gave her handmaiden to Jacob before Naphtali was born, that Rachel conceived before the birth of Zebulun, 26 Zilpah could have conceived Gad while Bilhah was pregnant with Naphtali, and Rachel could have conceived before Zebulun was born. The fact that Scripture tells us that Leah gave Zilpah to Jacob after Naphtali was born does not mean that that was the sequence of events. Cf. Cherez and Weiser. The point is there is no reason to assume that Jacob's children were born seven months apart. and that we do not know when Dinah was born.

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

FOR WHOM I HAVE SERVED THEE. This refers to my wives, not my children. 27 The verse reads, Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served thee. For whom I have served thee can conceivably apply to my children, hence I.E.'s comment. It is similar to and shed the blood of war in peace (I Kings 2:5). 28 See notes to I.E.'s comments on Gen. 20:17.

Verse 27

I HAVE OBSERVED THE SIGNS. Nichashti (I have observed the signs) means I have divined, 29 So according to Weiser. for Laban was an enchanter and had teraphim. 30 Instruments of sorcery. Cf. Gen. 31:34.

Verse 28

APPOINT. Nokvah (appoint) is an imperative. 31 The usual imperative form is nekov. Nokvah is an elongated form. It follows the paradigm of zokhrah (remember) in Remember (zokhrah) me, O my God, for good (Neh. 13:31). The meaning of nokvah (appoint) is, clearly state, as we see from Which the mouth of the Lord shall mark out 32 Or clearly state. (yikkovennu) (Is. 62:2). The dagesh of yikkovennu (shall mark out) compensates for the missing nun. 33 Thus nokvah and yikkovennu have the same root, nun, kof, bet and mean the same, viz., clearly state. We find the same with the word yiddevennu (make them willing) in whose heart maketh him willing (yiddevennu) (Ex. 25:2). 34 Yiddevennu has a dagesh in the dalet to make up for the missing nun. Thus yikkovennu and yiddevenu are similar. Both have a nun as a first root letter and the nun drops out in the imperfect and is replaced by a dagesh.

Verse 29

Verse 30

WITHERSOEVER I TURNED. Le-ragli (withersoever I turned) is to be rendered: because of my foot. 35 Ragli literally means my foot. The lamed prefixed to it is a causal lamed, in Hebrew, lamed ha-sibbah (Weiser). It is the custom of people to say so and so has a good foot. 36 So and so brings good fortune (Weiser). What Jacob was saying was: you have been blessed ever since I came to your house. The heh of me'umah (aught in v. 31) is superfluous. 37 Hence it is penultimately accented. The word is also found spelled without the heh. 38 Mum in Job 31:7.

Verse 31

Verse 32

STREAKED. 39 The words upon which I.E. comments, i.e., akuddim, nekuddim, beruddim are found in Gen. 31:10. I.E. inserted it here because he wanted to clarify the type of marks that the Bible refers to before proceeding to comment on the account of Jacob's hire. The streak was on the animal's foot. Akuddim (streaked) refers to a cord-like mark that bound the foot 40 The root ayin, kof, dalet means to bind. Akuddim is a mark resembling a cord going around the foot of the animal at the place where it is normally bound. This is what I.E. means by "a mark that bound the foot."
SPECKLED. Nekuddim means speckled.
GRIZZLED. Beruddim (grizzled) comes from the same root as barad (hail). It means having white spots. 41 Like hail.
[SPOTTED.] Talu is a general term for all type of spots. 42 At various places in the body (Weiser). It comes from the same root as u-metulla'ot (and clouted) in and worn shoes and clouted (u-metulla'ot) upon their feet (Josh. 9:5). 43 Its root is tet, lamed, alef. The meaning of u-metulla'ot is marked. 44 The patches (clouts) marked the shoes. We thus see that talu is a general term for spotted. The term seh (v. 32), refers to he-goats. 45 According to I.E. this clause should be translated: removing from thence every speckled and spotted he-goat. I.E. explains that seh refers to he-goats because the sheep were not speckled and spotted but were chum (dark) and the she-goats are mentioned in the final part of the verse. Hence seh must refer to he-goats (Cherez). It is similarly written the sheep (seh kevasim) and the goat (seh izim) (Deut. 14:4). 46 The term seh can thus apply to both goats and sheep. In the first part of our verse it applies to he-goats. Now since talu (spotted) is a general term for all type of spots, the meaning of every speckled and spotted (talu) one is: every he-goat speckled, streaked and grizzled. 47 I.E. explains that nakod means speckled and talu includes the other types of spots, i.e., a mark around the ankle, akuddim (streaked), and hail like spots, beruddim.
AND EVERY DARK ONE AMONG THE SHEEP. Chum means black. It is possible that chum means black because it is affected by heat (chom), for a black object gets hotter than a white object. 48 What I.E. probably means is that black objects absorb heat from the sun more than do white objects. This shows that heat causes blackness.
AND THE SPOTTED AND SPECKLED AMONG THE GOATS. Streaked, grizzled and speckled.

Verse 33

EVERY ONE THAT IS NOT SPECKLED AND SPOTTED AMONG THE GOATS. Speckled, grizzled and streaked.
AMONG THE GOATS. He and she-goats. 49 Since goats stand in contradistinction to sheep in our verse, it refers to all goats, both male and female.

Verse 34

Verse 35

AND HE REMOVED THAT DAY THE HE-GOATS THAT WERE STREAKED AND SPOTTED. Spotted (telu'im) means speckled and grizzled.
[AND ALL THE SHE-GOATS THAT WERE SPECKLED AND SPOTTED.] The interpretation of telu'ot (spotted) is streaked and grizzled. 50 Speckled is mentioned in the verse; hence telu'ot (spotted) refers to the other types of marks. This is what Scripture means by everyone that had white in it. 51 The verse should be read as follows: speckled and spotted, that

is, every one that had white in it (Weiser). The spots were white. "Every one that had white in it" explains speckled and spotted (Weiser).
AND ALL THE DARK ONES AMONG THE SHEEP. The black sheep. Chum (dark, black) is an adjective similar to a pa'ul. It follows the paradigm of sug (dissembler) in The dissembler (sug) in heart (Prov. 14:14). 52 I.E. calls it similar to pa'ul because only transitive verbs come in the pa'ul. Chum is intransitive. Nevertheless, it is similar to pa'ul in that it is an adjective. The same is true of sug (Cherez). Weiser translates: It is an adjective in the pu'al, following the paradigm of sug ; that is, it is an ayin, vav in the pu'al. A great grammarian explained the word haser (removing) 53 Haser can be either an infinitive or an imperative. The grammarian explained it as an infinitive because of the difficulty of coordinating I will pass with the imperative remove. in removing (haser) from thence (v. 32) as an infinitive, meaning to remove. The meaning of the aforementioned verse according to this scholar is: I will pass through all thy flock today to remove from thence every…and that which I remove will be my hire. 54 This is the meaning of: and of such shall be my hire. He further explained And gave them into the hands of his sons (v. 35) as referring to Jacob's sons. 55 Since according to this interpretation Jacob did the removing, he is the subject of verse 35 which reads: And he removed ; and his sons refers to Jacob's sons. However, he said that he set three days journey betwixt himself and Jacob (v. 36) pertains to Laban. 56 This is obvious. This comment is wrong in view of the fact that Jacob had no son older than Reuben, and he was not yet seven years old. 57 The events described in our passage took place after the close of Jacob's 14 years of service to Laban. Reuben, his oldest, was then not yet seven years old. How, then, could Jacob give the sheep to his small children to keep? This is the way our passage is to be explained: haser (v. 32) is, as its form indicates, an imperative meaning "remove" and the meaning of and of such shall be my hire (v. 32) is: such as these which you now remove will in the future be my hire. 58 Verse 32 does not tell us that Jacob removed the sheep and kept them as his hire and then gave them to his children to keep (v. 35). Rather, it tells us that Jacob told Laban, "Remove the spotted…sheep and goats from your flock and keep them. However, in the future such as these shall be my hire." Verse 35 tells us that Laban removed them and gave them to his (Laban's sons) to keep.
SO SHALL MY RIGHTEOUSNESS WITNESS AGAINST ME. My righteousness shall testify for me before thee, 59 I.E. connects before thee with so shall my righteousness witness against me, rather than with my hire, which precedes it (Krinsky, Cherez). when you come and look over my hire, viz., the flock that I have separated for myself. If you find among the latter a he and she-goat that is not streaked, speckled and grizzled or a sheep that is not black, then it shall be counted stolen. Behold you have already removed from the flock all goats streaked, speckled and grizzled and all black sheep. 60 Hence all such animals found with me must be mine.
AND LABAN SAID: BEHOLD. Hen (behold) is identical in meaning to hinneh, the heh being superfluous. 61 I.E. makes this comment because the usual term for behold in Scripture is hinneh. It is similar in this regard to ha-eleh (these) and ha-el (these). 62 See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 19:8. Both ha-el and ha-eleh mean the same, the heh being superfluous.
AND HE REMOVED. Laban removed. 63 I.E. makes this point because according to the grammarian quoted above, And he removed refers to Jacob.

Verse 36

AND HE SET. Here, too, Scripture speaks of Laban. 64 According to the grammarian quoted above, And he removed refers to Jacob and And he set refers to Laban. Hence I.E. points out that both refer to Laban.

Verse 37

RODS OF. Makkal (rods of) is vocalized with a pattach because it is in the construct.
POPLAR…ALMOND…AND PLANE TREE. Livneh (poplar), luz (almond) and armon (plane tree) are names of trees. However, lach (fresh) is an adjective. 65 Scripture reads, livneh lach, ve-luz ve-armon. Conceivably lach could be taken to be the name of a tree. Hence I.E. points out that lach is an adjective modifying livneh, i.e., fresh Saadiah Gaon says that luz means almond since that is its meaning in Arabic, and Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic belong to the same family.
MAKING THE WHITE APPEAR. He peeled the bark. Compare, The Lord hath made bare (chasaf) His holy arm (Is. 52:10). 66 We thus see that the root chet, sin, peh means to lay bare. Hence machsof ha-lavan means he laid bare the white (Weiser). He did this by peeling the bark. I.E. makes this point because the root chet, sin, peh can also mean to strip. Hence machsof ha-laven might be translated, stripping off the white.

Verse 38

PEELED. The word pitzel (peeled) means he made small cuts. 67 The verb pitzel is found in Scripture only in verses 37 and 38. According to I.E. it does not exactly mean to peel. See S.D. Luzzato's commentary on this verse.
IN THE GUTTERS. Pools containing water for the sheep to drink from. 68 I.E. apparently interpreted rehatim (gutters) as being synonymous with shikatot ha-mayim (watering troughs) (Weiser).
AND THEY CONCEIVED. Va-yechamnah (and they conceived) is a combination of masculine and feminine forms. 69 The feminine form third person plural is va-techamnah. The yod is a masculine prefix. Hence va-yechamnah combines the masculine (the yod) with the feminine. We find the same in the word va-yisharnah (and took…the straight way) in And the kine took the straightway (va-yisharnah) (I Sam. 6:12). 70 The correct feminine form is va-tisharnah. See note 69. The feminine should have been used since kine is feminine.

Verse 39

AND THE FLOCKS CONCEIVED. Va-yechemu means: and they conceived. 71 It comes from the root yod, chet, mem, meaning to be hot, that is, hot with sexual desire and by extension to conceive. This word is irregularly vocalized because of the chet which is a guttural. It should have been vocalized as va-yeshevu (and they sat down) in And they sat down (va-yeshevu) to eat bread (Gen. 37:25). 72 According to I.E. the root of va-yechemu is yod, chet, mem. Being a peh yod it should follow that paradigm. Thus the yod should be vocalized with a tzere as the yod of va-yeshev. However, since the chet is a guttural and is vocalized with a chataf segol, the yad is vocalized with a segol (Cherez). Don't be surprised at Scripture's use of the masculine 73 Va-yechemu. Females conceive, hence Scripture should have stated va-techamna hatzon rather than va-yechemu hatzon. when referring to female sheep. Hebrew is strict in differentiating between the masculine and feminine forms only in the singular and not in the plural.
AT THE SIGHT OF THE RODS. El ha-maklot should be rendered at the sight of the rod. Many are amazed at what is reported in our verse 74 That the sheep's fetuses were influenced by what the sheep looked at. and say that it can only be described as an out of the ordinary phenomenon. Really, what Scripture describes is indeed one of the wonders of nature. However, it is a natural law. Even a woman who is created in the image of the

angels affects her fetus by what she looks at while she is pregnant. 75 I.E. believed that it is a law that applies to all females. Hence what is described in our verse is not a supernatural phenomenon.
AND SPOTTED. Grizzled. This is so because telu'im (spotted) is a general term for all types of spots. 76 Since telu'im is a general term for speckled, streaked and grizzled, and speckled and streaked are specifically mentioned in our verse, telu'im can only refer to grizzled (Krinsky). The Bible sometimes uses a general term for the particular (Weiser).

Verse 40

AND JACOB SEPARATED THE LAMBS. Jacob also did one more thing. 77 In addition to peeling the sticks and having the goats face them while coupling. He separated the lambs and chose the streaked and the dark ones and set the faces of the flocks toward the streaked and dark ones so that they would produce similar offspring. This resulted in his having his own droves 78 Cherez. which he did not put unto Laban's flock. Others say that Jacob separated the lambs from his own flock and that and put his own droves apart should have preceded and Jacob separated the lambs. 79 The verse should be read as if written: And (Jacob) put his own droves apart and put them not unto Laban's flock, and Jacob separated the lambs (from his own droves) and set the faces of the flocks (of Laban) toward the streaked and all the dark (of Jacob's flock), he did this to all the flocks of Laban. It should be noted that according to this interpretation the meaning of be-tzon lavan (in the flock of Laban) is, he did this to all of Laban's flock. See Filwarg and Cherez.

Verse 41

WHENSOEVER THE STRONGER OF THE FLOCK DID CONCEIVE. In the month of Nisan, 80 Those born in the month of Nisan (Krinsky, Weiser). so that all those born would be strong and healthy. 81 The sun is strong then and the sheep born in this month are healthier.

Verse 42

BUT WHEN THE FLOCK WERE FEEBLE. In the month of Tishri. 82 Born in Tishri. Jacob did this so that Laban would not know that he was employing the sticks to produce spotted goats. 83 Had Jacob not done this, all the sheep would have been black and all the goats spotted and Laban would have known that something was wrong. Thus Jacob had to produce sheep for Laban. He did so when the offspring would be of inferior quality.
FEEBLE. Atufim means feeble; compare, Their soul fainted (titattaf) in them (Ps. 107:5).

Chapter 31

Verse 1

THE WORDS OF LABAN'S SONS. Laban had sons as Scripture explicitly tells us, and (Laban) gave them into the hand of his sons (Gen. 30:35). 1 See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 30:35.

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

YOUR FATHER'S COUNTENANCE. I can tell by looking at your father's countenance that he is not (ennenu) toward me as beforetime. 2 The verse reads: Ro-eh anokhi et pene avichen ki enennu elai kitmol shilshom. Pene (countenance) is a plural. The word enennu can be translated: he is not or it is not. If enennu is connected to pene the Bible should have employed enam, which is a plural, rather than enennu which is a singular. Hence enennu cannot refer to pene. It is rather connected to avikhen (your father) (Filwarg, Cherez). The verse is thus to be rendered: I see by your father's countenance that he is not toward me as beforetime. On the other hand, enennu (he is not) may refer to countenance (pene). 3 In this case the meaning of the verse is: I see your father's countenance that it (the countenance) is not toward me as beforetime. Compare, The anger (pene) of the Lord hath divided them (chillekam) (Lam. 4:16). 4 Where we find pene, a plural, connected to a singular. In this verse the verb pertaining to pene, chillekam (hath divided them) is in the singular. We thus see that while pene is a plural, it can be treated as a singular (Filwarg, Cherez). Hence enennu can refer to face. Weiser explains that pene is not really treated as a singular. It is a plural but a singular follows it for emphasis.

Verse 6

Verse 7

HATH MOCKED ME. Hetel is irregular in that it lacks a dagesh. 5 A dagesh should have been placed in the tav. According to I.E. hetel is a pi'el. The middle root letter of a pi'el perfect receives a dagesh, and the first root letter is vocalized with a chirik. Thus "mocked" should have been vocalized hittel. Hence hetel is irregular (Filwarg). It should have a dagesh like the word va-yehattel (and he mocked) in that Elijah mocked (va-yehattel) them (I Kings 18:27). 6 Va-yehattel is a pi'el, has a dagesh and follows the normal pi'el paradigm. The meaning of hetel is mocked. 7 It means to mock by deceiving.
TEN TIMES. The word monin (times) is akin to the word meneh (number) in Go number (meneh) the people (II Sam. 24:1). 8 There is no such verse in the Bible. The reference is obviously to II Sam. 24:1. The text there reads, Go, number Israel and Judah. This is either a scribal error in the text of I.E., or it indicates that the author quoted verses from memory. The meaning of our verse is: your father deceived me ten times. Or ten signifies many times. 9 Cohen. Ten is a round number (Friedlander).

Verse 8

From the statement, The streaked shall be thy wages, it is clear that Laban changed Jacob's hire so that it was limited only to streaked goats. 10 Jacob's wages were to consist of speckled, spotted and streaked goats. Laban, as this verse indicates, changed his original conditions and gave

Jacob only one of this kind rather than all three. At other times Laban limited Jacob's hire to speckled goats.

Verse 9

THUS GOD HATH TAKEN AWAY. Va-yatzel (hath taken away) is similar in meaning to va-yenatzelu (and they despoiled) in And they despoiled (va-yenatzelu) the Egyptians (Ex. 12:36). 11 They both mean to take. However, there is a difference in nuance between them. In our verse the word is in the hifil and it connotes taking what rightfully belongs to one. In Ex. 12:36 it is in the pi'el (the intensive) and it means to take highhandedly, to despoil (Weiser). Both (va-yatzel and va-yenatzelu) come from the same root as hatzileni (deliver me) 12 The root being nun, tzadi, lamed. (Gen. 32:12), although in the latter case the meaning of the word is a bit different from the first two examples. 13 Here it means to save from death, take away from danger, to deliver. What Jacob told his wives was also true. 14 Not only is what Jacob reported concerning Laban's cheating true, but the report of the dream is also true. The Bible often omits events in a narrative but later reports what has been omitted in its recapitulation of the events (Weiser). Jacob dreamed that God would aid him so that his sheep would increase and be strong even without the use of the peeled sticks. 15 At those times God saw to it that the goats were born strong, streaked, speckled and spotted.

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

I AM THE GOD OF BETH-EL. Its meaning is: I am the God, God of Beth-el. 16 A word with the definite article prefixed to it cannot be in the construct. Since ha-el has the definite article prefixed to it, it cannot be in the construct with Beth-el. Hence what we are dealing with is an abridged phrase. See notes to I.E.'s comment on Gen. 2:9. The same is the case with and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:9), which is to be interpreted as if written: and the tree of the knowledge, knowledge of good and evil. 17 See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 2:9.

Verse 14

Verse 15

FOR HE HATH SOLD US. It is as if he sold us 18 Laban did not actually sell them, hence I.E.'s comment. in that he did not do with us what a father normally does with his daughters. What he did was to say to you, "Guard my flock and take my daughters as your hire."

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

HE HAD GATHERED. Rakhash (he had gathered) comes from the same root as rekhush (substance). 19 Rakhash is a denominative of rekhush (Weiser).

Verse 19

NOW LABAN WAS GONE TO SHEAR HIS SHEEP. That were in the care of his sons who were three days journey away, as is reported by Scripture (Gen. 30:35, 36). Hence, it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled (v. 22). 20 I.E's point is that since Laban was three days journey from Jacob, it took that long for him to learn that Jacob had fled.
THE TERAPHIM. Some say that the teraphim are copper objects used to tell time. 21 A copper sun dial that was also used for divination (Weiser). Others say that astrologers have the power to make an image that speaks at certain times. 22 Vat. Ebr. 38 reads: to make an image of certain known stars, and this image speaks. They offer proof from For the teraphim have spoken vanity (Zech. 10:2). 23 We thus see that the teraphim speak. However, this is not the meaning of the aforementioned verse. 24 The verse is not to be interpreted as meaning that the teraphim actually speak. It means that the signs they give are false. Speak is used figuratively, as in what do the cards say (cf. Krinsky). I believe that the teraphim are human images made to draw power from above. 25 See I.E.'s comment on Ex. 20:20. I am not permitted to explain this any further. 26 Lest people learn to make them. Proof that the teraphim are human forms can be found in the teraphim which Michal, the daughter of Saul, placed in David's bed thereby fooling the guards into thinking that the teraphim were really David. 27 Cf. I Sam. 19:13-17. As to the verse which states, For the children of Israel shall sit solitary many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim (Hos. 3:4), 28 This verse implies that there is nothing wrong with teraphim. Quite the contrary, it is juxtaposed with the ephod, a garment used in the service of the Lord. it can be explained in two ways. One, the prophet says, Israel shall be without king, and without prince because God chose only members of the Davidic family to be kings over Israel. Therefore the verse which follows says, afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king (v. 5). The verse continues, and without sacrifice, and without pillar ; this refers to sacrifices and pillars to the idols. In a similar manner, and without ephod also refers to idolatry, because the worshippers of Baal made an imitation of the ephod that Moses made. 29 The two interpretations of Hos. 3:4 are: A. The verse deals with idol worship, hence the juxtaposition of ephod and teraphim. B. The verse deals both with the worship of God and with idolatry. According to the latter interpretation and without ephod or teraphim means neither the worship of God nor idolatry. Hence Scripture reads ephod and not "the ephod" as in Bring hither the ephod (I Sam. 23:9). 30 According to I.E. ephod means an ephod. The ephod, with the definite article prefixed to it, is the ephod made by Moses. Therefore an ephod in his hand (Ibid. v. 6) does not refer to the ephod made by Moses. I will explain the ephod and offer irrefutable proofs for my interpretation concerning it in the proper place if God will be kind to me and grant me life. 31 Cf. I.E.'s "long commentary" on Ex. 28:6. The second interpretation is that and without ephod or teraphim means, they will

neither serve God (without ephod) nor idols (or teraphim). 32 According to this interpretation the ephod mentioned in Hos. 3:4 refers to the one used in the worship of the Lord. That teraphim are idols can be ascertained by Laban's referring to them as gods (v. 30). 33 We thus see that the teraphim were used in idol worship although they were not originally made for that purpose. This validates I.E.'s interpretation that the teraphim refer to idol worship. In Hosea I.E. explains this second interpretation as follows: and without sacrifice to God, and without pillar to Baal, and without ephod to God or teraphim to Baal. Some say that Rachel stole the teraphim in order to keep her father from idolatry. 34 Cf. Rashi. If this were the case, why did she take them with her and not bury them on the way? 35 As Jacob did with the idols his children had on them. Cf. Gen. 35:2-4. The most likely reason that Rachel stole the teraphim was that Laban, her father, was an astrologer, and Rachel feared that he would look at the stars and discover which way they fled. 36 The teraphim, which were in human form, drew powers from the stars and revealed hidden things to Laban. Krinsky and Weiser suggest that I.E. is of the opinion that the teraphim had images of stars on them and through them Laban could divine hidden things.

Verse 20

AND JACOB OUTWITTED LABAN. Jacob stole nothing from Laban save his "wits." Scripture uses the term heart for wits because the heart is the seat of man's intelligence. 37 Verse 20 literally reads: And Jacob stole the heart of Laban the Aramean. I.E. points out that unlike Rachel, who stole the teraphim, Jacob stole only Laban's heart; i.e., he fooled him.

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

AND GOD CAME TO LABAN THE ARAMEAN. This occurred before he overtook him (v. 23). Therefore its (v. 4) meaning is, and God had already come to Laban the Aramean. I have already pointed out many similar instances. 38 Of the use of the pluperfect. See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 1:9. Would Laban spend the night doing nothing after overtaking Jacob, thereby give him a chance to escape? Thus we must assume that upon overtaking Jacob, he confronted him and that And God came to Laban…in a dream means, and God had come to Laban…in a dream. God appeared to Laban out of respect for Jacob. 39 Laban was no prophet. It was only out of God's regard for Jacob that He appeared to Laban.
EITHER GOOD OR BAD. Do not speak to Jacob about returning even if you think it is for his good. 40 This is what Scripture means by good. Laban obviously spoke to Jacob. Indeed, Scripture records their conversation. What God meant was, do not try to convince him to return by threats, or by promises, even if the latter are sincere (Weiser).

Verse 25

AND LABAN WITH HIS BRETHREN PITCHED. Et echav is to be rendered: with his brethren. 41 Et is the sign of the direct object Hence et echav means his brethren. The verse thus might conceivably be rendered: Laban pitched his brethren. However, this is impossible since pitched refers to tents, hence I.E. points out that et here is not the sign of the direct object but is to be rendered with.
The word tent written in reference to Jacob also carries over to Laban. 42 The object following pitched with reference to Laban is missing, hence I.E.'s comment. That is, now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountain, and Laban pitched his tent with his brethren in the mountain of Gilead.

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

NOW HAST THOU DONE FOOLISHLY. Aso (done) is an infinitive. 43 The infinitive of the root ayin, sin, heh is asot. Aso is short for asot (Weiser), or the vav of aso takes the place of the tav (Cherez). It is in the construct 44 The ayin of aso is vocalized with a chataf pattach. This is the construct vocalization. Had it been in the absolute, it would have been vocalized with a kamatz (Weiser). with either this or so. However, they are missing. 45 The text is abridged. It should have read hiskalta asot zeh or hiskalta asot ken. I.E. thus renders Now thou hast done foolishly as: thou hast acted foolishly in doing this (deed) or, thou hast acted foolishly in doing so.

Verse 29

IT IS IN THE POWER. El is to be rendered power. Compare, I am become as a man that hath no help (eyal) (Ps. 88:5). 46 Eyal (help) is rendered by I.E. as strength.

Verse 30

LONGEST. Nikhsof (longest) is an infinitive in the nifal. It is similar to nilchom (fight) in or did he ever fight (nilchom) against them (Jud. 11:25).
The word nikhsafta means thou longest. Yikhsof (eager) in He is like a lion that is eager (yikhsof) to tear in pieces (Ps. 17:12) is similar.

Verse 31

Verse 32

HE SHALL NOT LIVE. Because I will put him to death. Some say that this was a prayer 47 Jacob prayed, "May God strike the one who stole the teraphim dead." This interpretation is offered by Rashi. It is found in the Talmud, Berakhot 56a; Sanhedrin 90b. and it was because of this utterance that Rachel died on the way. 48 In childbirth. In the way is a quote from Gen. 48:7. If this be so, let them tell us who prayed and thus caused the death of Phinehas' wife? 49 She, too, died in childbirth. Cf. I Sam. 4:19, 20.

Verse 33

AND LABAN WENT INTO JACOB'S TENT, AND INTO LEAH'S TENT, AND INTO THE TENT OF THE TWO MAID-SERVANTS. Both maid-servants shared one tent. Or it (v. 33) means into the tent of each one of the two maid-servants. 50 And into the tent of the two maid-servants is short for: into the tent of each of the two maid-servants (Weiser). Afterward 51 After searching the tents of Jacob, Leah and the two maid-servants. Laban entered Leah's tent a second time. Proof of this is Scripture's statement, And he went out of Leah's tent. It is also possible that Jacob's tent was between Leah's and Rachel's tents. 52 The question which I.E. deals with here is: Why did Laban search Rachel's tent last? We would expect him to search her tent after that of Leah. I.E. suggests that Jacob's tent was in the middle, between that of Rachel and Leah, and that to the side of Leah's tent stood the tent (or tents) of the maid servants. After searching Jacob's tent, Laban decided to search the tent of his older daughter first. Coming out of Leah's tent he found the tent of the maid servants and searched it On his way back he stepped another time into Leah's tent, found nothing there and proceeded to search Rachel's tent He did not search Rachel's tent after that of Leah because it was not next to it (Cherez). However, it appears to me that the Bible tells us what happened in abridged form 53 It omits telling us that the search of Rachel's tent took place after the search of Leah's tent. Scripture first tells us about those tents where Laban found nothing. It then tells us what happened when Laban searched Rachel's tent. and puts off the mention of Rachel's tent for last. The sequence of events was as follows. Laban searched Jacob's tent, then Leah's tent, then Rachel's tent and then the tent of the two maid-servants. The meaning of our verses (33 and 34) is that Laban searched Jacob's tent, Leah's tent and the tent of the two maid-servants and found nothing because there was nothing of his there. Scripture then tells us that when Laban went out of Leah's tent and into Rachel's tent where the teraphim had been, Rachel had by then taken them and put them in the saddle of the camel. 54 Scripture puts off telling what happened when he searched Rachel's tent in order to be able to elaborate.

Verse 34

[IN THE SADDLE.] Some say that kar (saddle) is a kind of saddle cloth. 55 Weiser. However, I believe that the term kar ha-gamal (saddle of the camel) 56 I.E. explains kar ha-gamal as a double word and that Scripture uses two words having the same meaning even though one word would suffice. See I.E.'s comment on Gen. 8:11 and the notes thereto. means a camel, as in Send ye the camel (kar) for the ruler of the land 57 Translated according to I.E. According to I.E. a kar is a noble and especially swift species of camel. Cf. I.E.'s comments on Is. 16:1; 66:20. (Is. 16:1); and u-va-kirkarot (and upon the camels) (Is. 66:20). 58 Translated according to I.E. I further hold that the driver or rider of the kar (camel) is called the kari (II Kings 11:19). Rachel took the teraphim and put them in the place where the camel (kar ha-gamal) was kept. 59 Rather than: And she put them in the saddle of the camel. AND SAT UPON THEM. She was not in the tent. 60 She was not in her tent but rather where the camel was. The reason I.E. does not interpret kar to mean cushion, or saddle, is that the word kar is not so used in Scripture. It is only so used in Rabbinic literature (Cherez).

Verse 35

Verse 36

THAT THOU HAST HOTLY PURSUED. Dalakta means pursued. Yidlak in the poor is hotly pursued (yidlak) (Ps. 10:2) is similar.

Verse 37

Verse 38

Verse 39

I BORE THE LOSS OF IT. If any of the flock was torn by beasts, I bore the guilt 61 I.E. points out that achatennah (I bore the loss of it) is a denominative of chet (sin). Hence achatennah means I was guilty for it, the sin, was on me and I thus had to make it up and replace it. and I gave you its equivalent.
STOLEN BY DAY. The yod of genuveti (stolen) is superfluous. It is similar to the yod of mele'ati (full of) (Is. 1:21). 62 Genuveti has the same meaning as genuvat. Mele'ati has the same meaning as mele'at. The meaning of our verse is: whether stolen by day or by night, 63 The Hebrew reads genuveti yom u-genuveti layelah (stolen by day and stolen by night). I.E. points out that the vav does not mean "and" but that it means "or" or "whether." That is, it made no difference to you whether it was stolen during the day or night. of my hand didst thou require it.

Verse 40

Verse 41

Verse 42

AND THE FEAR OF ISAAC. Isaac's fear of the Lord aided me, for the merits of a father help his son.
[EMPTY.] The mem of rekam (empty) is not a root letter. 64 Its root is resh yod kof. The word is a noun. 65 It is an adverb, but I.E. included it among the nouns (Weiser). The Bible employs this form (rekam) 66 Hebrew nouns change according to gender and are written differently in the singular and the plural. However, since this word is an adverb, although I.E. classifies it as a noun, it is treated as an adverb. with the masculine, 67 In our verse, rekam shillachtani. feminine 68 Ruth 1:21. and the plural. 69 Ex. 23:15. The mems of omnam (verily, truly) 70 II Kings 19:17, Job 34:12. The root of omnam is alef, mem, nun. The final mem is not a root letter. and chinnam (for nothing, gratis) are similar. 71 Gen. 29:15, Ex. 21:2, 11. Its root is chet, nun, nun, thus the final mem is not a root letter.

Verse 43

AND WHAT CAN I DO THIS DAY FOR THESE MY DAUGHTERS. Laban was being especially explicit. 72 These is unnecessary. The text should have read, for my daughters. The verse should be understood thus: and to these my

daughters, what can I do to them? 73 How could I think of doing harm to these my daughters. The Hebrew literally reads: And to my daughters, what can I do to these. Hence I.E.'s explanation as how the verse should be understood.

Verse 44

Verse 45

A PILLAR. Because he set it up. 74 Jacob called the pillar a matzevah because he set it up (hitziv otah) (Weiser). Cherez explains that a pillar is so called because it is set up.

Verse 46

A HEAP. A gal (heap) is so called because it is formed by rolling stones together. 75 Hence the noun gal (heap) comes from the verb galal (to roll) (Weiser). He also called it Mizpah. 76 Cf. verse 49. Weiser points out that the suffix of kare'ah (he called it) is feminine and cannot refer to gal (heap) which is masculine. It must therefore refer to matzevah (pillar) which is feminine. Weiser claims that I.E.'s comment was transposed from verse 49 by a scribe who mistakenly thought that it referred to the heap. What I.E. is saying is that the heap was called Galeed and the pillar Mizpah. Cherez claims that it refers to the place. He called the place by two names, Galeed and Mizpah (place here being treated as feminine).

Verse 47

Verse 48

Verse 49

[THE LORD WATCH.] The meaning of yitzef adonai is : the Lord will watch. I have appointed thee a watchman (tzofeh) (Ez. 3:17) is similar.
[WHEN WE ARE ABSENT.] Ki nissater (when we are absent) is to be read as if written: ki nissater anachnu. 77 The text reads: ki nissater ish me-re'ehu. I.E. says that this should be read as if written: ki nissater "anachnu" ish me-re'ehu. The reason for inserting anachnu is that the context requires a first person plural pronoun (anachnu) following nissater (a verb in the first person plural imperfect) since what follows (ish me-re'ehu) is in the third person. We will be distant one from another and will not be able to see each other. Nevertheless, God will see each one of us.
[FOR HE SAID.] This refers to Laban. Jacob called it 78 The pillar (Weiser). According to Cherez, the place. Mizpah because Laban said to him, the Lord will watch, etc. 79 And Mizpah for he said: The Lord… should be understood as follows: and Mizpah, i.e., Jacob called it (the stone) Mizpah because and he said, i.e., Laban said to him, the Lord watch, etc.

Verse 50

IF THOU SHALT AFFLICT MY DAUGHTERS. Saadiah Gaon explains this to mean: if you will not cohabit with your wives. 80 So also Yoma 77b and Rashi. Now this is a strange rendition of afflict. Nowhere in Scripture does afflict have this connotation. 81 It may mean to rape. Cf. Gen. 34:2. It is never used in the sense of withholding relations. What problem is there in interpreting the term according to its plain sense? 82 Causing pain. Its meaning is: do not do anything evil to my daughters or force them to do things against their will. Jagar-sahadutha is Aramaic for Galeed. 83 This comment has been misplaced. Its proper place is in verse 47 (Weiser).

Verse 51

WHICH I HAVE SET UP. Laban and his brethren. 84 I.E. explains that yariti (which in Hebrew means I have cast) refers to the heap of stones since the pillar was set up by Jacob alone (v. 45). Laban said, I have cast, because it was Laban and his brethren who made the heap, for we read, And they took stones and made a heap (v. 46). They cast stones and formed the heap. Yariti comes from the same root as yarah 85 Its root is yod, resh, heh and it means to cast. (cast) in hath He cast (yarah) into the sea (Ex. 15:4). He cast them into one place. 86 I.E. is explaining what to cast a heap means. It means to cast many stones in one place until a heap is formed.

Verse 52

THAT I WILL NOT PASS OVER. The covenant made on this heap. 87 This heap thus means the covenant made on this heap. E'evor (pass over) in our verse has the meaning of violate, 88 The root ayin, bet, resh means to pass over, hence to violate, to "pass over the law, or agreement." The meaning of our verse thus is: that I will not violate the covenant made on this heap. as in they have transgressed (averu) the statute (Is. 24:5). 89 Averu chok (they have violated the statue) is not found in the Bible. The reference is probably to Is. 24:5, they have transgressed the laws (averu torot), violated the statute (chalefu chok). For an explanation of the misquote, see above note 8.
[FOR HARM.] To do harm. Others say that it means, thou shalt not pass over this heap to harm me and I will not pass over this heap to harm thee. 90 In this case the root ayin, bet, resh has its primary meaning of to pass over, and heap does not mean the covenant made at the heap but rather the heap which will serve as a border.

Verse 53

[THE GOD OF THEIR FATHER.] Each one said: the God of our Father judge betwixt us. 91 The Bible says, The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their Father, judge betwixt us. One might thus think that both took the same oath and swore by the same Deity. I.E. points out that this is not so. Nahor served idols; hence his god was an idol. However, Jacob referred to the God of Abraham and Laban to the god of Nahor, his grandfather who worshiped idols as is attested by Joshua. 92 Cf. Josh. 24:2, Your fathers dwelt of old time beyond the River, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods. I.E., in his comments on Gen. 20:17 points out that they served refers to Terah and Nahor. We thus see that Nahor served idols.
AND JACOB SWORE BY THE FEAR OF HIS FATHER. Fear of his father means the One whom his father feared. Others say that this alludes to the day when Jacob's father Isaac was bound on the altar. The latter interpretation is not far-fetched.

Chapter 32

Verse 1

HIS SONS. His grandsons, the sons of his daughters. 1 Laban was not bidding his sons adieu; hence his sons must refer to his grandsons.

Verse 2

AND THE ANGELS OF GOD MET HIM. To assist him on the way. Only Jacob saw the camp 2 Scripture says he saw them ; i.e., only Jacob saw them (Krinsky). of angels surrounding his camp. He called the name of the place Mahanaim (two camps), because of the two camps there, his and the angels'.

Verse 3

Verse 4

AND JACOB SENT. This verse teaches us that the land of Edom lies between Haran and the land of Israel. This disproves Saadiah Gaon's contention that Sinai, Seir and Paran are next to each other. 3 Since Jacob was on the way to the land of Israel from Haran, why did he send messengers to Edom? We must assume that Edom is between Syria (Haran) and Israel, and Jacob thus had to reconcile his brother before he passed through his territory. This disproves Saadiah's contention that Seir (Edom) is near Sinai, for Sinai is located southwest of Israel while Haran lies northeast of the land of Israel. The problem with I.E.'s note is that Edom was located southeast of Israel, while Haran, as just noted, lies northeast. This is another example of I.E.'s lack of knowledge concerning the geography of the Holy Land and its environs. [MESSENGERS.] From among his servants. 4 I.E. takes issue with the Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 75:3 and Rashi who interpret malakhim to mean angels rather than human messengers.

Verse 5

THUS SHALL YE SAY UNTO MY LORD. Jacob used this language so that it would be clear to them that Esau was his lord and they should address him as a servant addresses his master.
AND STAYED UNTIL NOW. The alef of echar (and stayed) is a first person imperfect prefix. It is vocalized with a tzere to make up for the missing alef of the root. 5 The root of echar is alef, chet, resh. In the first person imperfect an alef vocalized with a segol is prefixed to the root. Our word thus should have been written e'echar (two alefs respectively vocalized with a segol and a chataf segol). However, it is written echar and has only one alef and is vocalized with a tzere. I.E. points out that this alef is not a root letter. It is a first person imperfect prefix vocalized with a tzere rather than a segol to make up for the missing root letter. Ehav (I love) in I love them (ehav) that love me (Prov. 8:17) is similar. 6 The root of ahav (love) is alef, heh, bet. Thus the first person imperfect should be e'ehav. However, the verse has ehav, one alef vocalized with a tzere. See above note. The alef of the root is dropped because it is extremely difficult to pronounce two alefs back to back. Echar is a kal.

Verse 6

OXEN AND ASSES. These are nouns referring to the respective species. 7 The Hebrew has an ox and an ass, hence I.E.'s comment.
AND I HAVE SENT TO TELL MY LORD. That I wish to do whatever he commands me. 8 The verse does not say what they were to tell Esau. I.E. points out that following to tell my Lord, we must insert: that I wish to do whatever he commands me. This is the meaning of that I may find favor in thy sight 9 Once we insert that I wish to do, etc., in the text, the meaning of so that I may find favor in thy sight becomes clear.

Verse 7

AND MOREOVER HE COMETH TO MEET THEE. He was told that you are coming.

Verse 8

AND WAS DISTRESSED. This thing distressed him. 10 According to Filwarg. Others interpret slightly differently. Va-yetzer (and he was distressed) is in the hifil. 11 Since va-yetzer is a hifil the word does not mean and he was distressed, but rather, it distressed him. Hence I.E. comments "this thing distressed him"; i.e., his brother's coming distressed him. Others maintain that va-yetzer is a nifal meaning and he was distressed. Filwarg asks, "If va-yetzer is a hifil why isn't it vocalized va-yatzer as is the rule with a double root (tzadi, resh, resh is the root of va-yetzer) in the hifil?" He suggests that va-yetzer is irregular. Weiser suggests that perhaps I.E.'s text of the Bible was vocalized va-yatzer. For a discussion of the problems concerning this comment of I.E., see Filwarg, Weiser and Cherez. It is similar to ve-hetzar 12 Which is in the hifil. (and he shall besiege) in and he shall besiege (ve-hetzar) thee (Deut. 28:52).
AND HE DIVIDED. The yad of va-yachatz (and he divided) is vocalized with a pattach because it precedes a guttural. 13 The root of va-yachatz is chet, tzadi, heh. Va-yachatz is an abridged kal imperfect with a conversive vav. In such cases the yod is vocalized with a chirik. Compare, ve-yifen and va-yiven. Hence I.E.'s comment. Compare, (va-ya'al) in And Moses went up (va-ya'al moshe) (Ex. 19:20). 14 Here, too, we have an abridged imperfect with the yod vocalized with a pattach rather than a chirik. The reason is also that it precedes a guttural (the ayin). The root of va-ya'al is ayin, lamed, heh.

Verse 9

CAMP. The word for camp (machaneh) can be either masculine or feminine 15 I.E. makes the point because the word is found in both the masculine and the feminine in our verse. Machaneh ha-achat (one camp) is feminine. However, the suffix of ve-hikkahu (smite it) is masculine, as is machanah ha-nishar (the camp which is left). like the word for house (bayit) and place (makom).
THEN THE CAMP WHICH IS LEFT SHALL ESCAPE. Perhaps 16 The point is that the vav of ve-hayah does not indicate certainty, for how could Jacob be certain one camp would escape? Its meaning is perhaps. Thus rather than translating our verse: then the camp which is left shall escape, it should he rendered: perhaps the camp that is left shall escape. the camp that is left shall flee, or perhaps my brother's anger shall be assuaged after smiting one of the camps, or perhaps God will send them relief and deliverance. If the Arameans be too strong for me, then thou shalt save me (II Sam. 10:11) is similar. 17 Here, too, there was no certainty. What Joab said was, if the Arameans be too strong for me perhaps you will be able to save me. Thus ve-hayita li li-shu'ah (II Sam. 10:11) does not

mean, then thou shalt save me. Rabbi Solomon's 18 Rashi. comment, to the effect that then the camp that is left shall escape means that the camp will be saved despite Esau's intention, is Midrashic. 19 Rashi apparently interpreted ve-hayah as indicating certainty, then (ve-hayah) the camp that is left shall escape, i.e., despite Esau's will, it shall be saved. I.E. claims that this is not the literal meaning of the verse (Cherez). Although God promised Jacob, And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth (Gen. 28:14), 20 This verse indicates that Jacob's children would not be destroyed. I.E. now argues that one cannot substantiate Rashi's interpretation that Jacob was certain, on the basis of God's promise to him in Gen. 28:14, that at least one of his camps would escape (Cherez). Jacob did not know whether it referred to the children he now had, or to children he would have in the future. 21 How could Jacob be sure that one camp would escape, since the promise may not have applied to the children he now had (Cherez). A prophet does not know hidden things unless God reveals them to him. 22 The fact that Jacob was a prophet does not mean that he knew that God's promise recorded in Gen 28:14 applied to his present children. Jacob was alive when Joseph was sold into slavery and yet was unaware of it. 23 He thought Joseph was dead and was unaware that he had been sold into slavery. Similarly Elisha said, and the Lord hath hid it from me (II Kings 4:27). The above also answers those who ask, why was Jacob afraid considering that God promised that he would protect him, viz., God's assurance, and I will be with thee (Gen. 31:3)? The latter is also the promise referred to by Jacob when he said, And thou saidest I will surely do thee good (v. 13). 24 We do not find God saying, I will surely do thee good. Hence when Jacob said, And Thou saidest: I will surely do thee good, he was restating, and I will be with thee. Jacob was afraid because of the possibility that he alone would escape. Furthermore, we know that the personality of the individual is taken into account when his sins are considered, be they major or minor transgressions. Therefore, a minor sin committed by a great personality is considered a major transgression. Jacob was afraid that he may have sinned or inadvertently transgressed in his mind and as a result of this God no longer would be with him. Do not be amazed at what I write, for behold, Moses the greatest of men, whom God himself sent to bring Israel out of Egypt erred and God sent an angel to kill him. 25 Moses erred in not immediately circumcising his son. As a result God sent an angel to kill him (Ex. 4:24-26). God acted in this manner because a minor sin committed by a man of Moses' stature was considered by the Almighty to be a major transgression. Similarly Jacob was afraid that he might have committed a minor sin resulting in God's removal of His divine protection, hence his anxiety.

Verse 10

Verse 11

I AM NOT WORTHY. Katonti (I am not worthy) is vocalized like yakholti (I have prevailed) in gam yakholti (Gen. 30:8). 26 A kal in the perfect is usually vocalized with a pattach beneath the middle root letter. However, katonti and yacholti are vocalized with a cholam. The meaning of our verse is: I am insignificant and of little worth for you to have done all these merciful deeds for me. 27 The verse literally reads: I am small. I.E. interprets this to mean I am insignificant. Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 76:4: Katonti. Rabbi Abba says, "This means I am not worthy." I have already explained the meaning of mercy and truth. 28 Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 24:49.

Verse 12

AND SMITE ME. And smite me applies to two phrases. 29 Ve-hekkani is in the singular and prima facie refers only to Jacob. Thus nothing is stated about what Esau will do to the mother and the children. It is similar to And Saul's son had two men that were captains of bands (II Sam. 4:2). 30 The Hebrew literally reads: And two men, captains of bands were son of Saul. I.E. says that captains of should be read as if written twice, i.e., And two men, captains of bands, were captains of Saul's son. Cf. Kimchi's comment on this verse. Our verse should be read as follows: and smite me and smite the mother and the children.

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

TWO HUNDRED SHE-GOATS. Jacob sent ten females for every male of the flock, 31 Ten she-goats for every he-goat and 10 ewes for each ram. four bulls for each cow, and two she-asses for every foal. He did this because he knew their nature. 32 He sent as many males as were needed to service the females.

Verse 16

Verse 17

AND PUT A SPACE. The word revach means a space. Harevachah (respite) in That there was respite (harevachah) (Ex. 8:11) is close in meaning to it. The meaning of the latter is, there was a separation between one plague and the other. It is similar to ve-ravach (found relief) in so Saul found relief (ve-ravach le-sha'ul) (I Sam. 16:23). 33 Saul had space. Figuratively speaking, he went out of his straits to an open space. Thus the root resh, vav, chet can refer to physical space, or space in time, to relief.

Verse 18

AND ASKETH THEE SAYING. U-she'elekha 34 when a kal in the third person has the suffix kha added to it, the second root letter is usually vocalized with a kamatz, hence I.E.'s comment. (and asketh thee) is vocalized the same as ahevekha (he loveth thee). 35 Deut. 15:16. It, too, is vocalized with a tzere rather than with a kamatz beneath the second root letter (the heh).

Verse 19

Verse 20

AND ALL THAT FOLLOWED. Scripture says this because there were five groups. 36 Goats, sheep, camels, cattle and asses. Scripture notes that

Jacob commanded the foremost, the second and the third group, and all that followed what to tell Esau because there were five groups and each group was instructed what to say.
WHEN YE FIND HIM. The tzadi of be-motza'akhem (when ye find) is vocalized with a pattach because it precedes a guttural. 37 When an infinitive is combined with a pronominal suffix, the second root letter is vocalized with a sheva, as in be-shovbekha (Deut. 6:7) or tofsekhem (Josh. 8:8). However, in our case rather than being vocalized with a sheva, the second root letter is vocalized with a pattach. We thus read, motza'akhem rather than motzakhem. I.E. explains that this is so because the tsadi precedes a guttural (the alef) (Cherez). This is so even though we do not find another example of this in the Bible. 38 In all other similar cases, i.e., even preceding a guttural, the second root letter is vocalized with a sheva. Compare, shomakhem (Deut. 5:20), where the mem is vocalized with a sheva even though it precedes an ayin, a guttural (Cherez). Thus I.E. notes that while his explanation is correct with regard to our word it does not hold for similar words in Scripture.

Verse 21

FOR HE SAID. He said in his heart. 39 Jacob thought this. He did not instruct his messengers to say this to Esau, as one might gather from the verse. These are the words of Moses. 40 Moses in writing the Torah explained what motivated Jacob to send these gifts to Esau.
[I WILL APPEASE HIM.] Akhapperah (I will appease him) means I will cover or hide. 41 The root of akhapperah is caf, peh, resh, which means to cover. Panav (him) 42 Panav usually means face or countenance. Here it means anger. Jacob said, "I will cover his anger"; i.e., I will appease him. Weiser suggests that since anger is expressed in the face, face is, by extension, occasionally used as a synonym for anger. means his anger. Peneha (her countenance) in and her countenance (u-faneha) was no more sad 43 According to I.E. this should be rendered: her anger was no more, i.e., she was pacified. (I Sam. 1:18) is similar.

Verse 22

Verse 23

AND PASSED OVER THE FORD OF THE JABBOK. Jacob passed over first. 44 Scripture reads: And he rose up that night and took his two wives, and his two handmaids, and his eleven children, and (he) passed over the ford Jabbok (v. 23). And he took them, and sent them over the stream (v. 24). This is difficult to understand. Why interrupt the sequence of the narrative with and (he) passed over the ford Jabbok? Furthermore, if Jacob passed over the ford by himself, how could he take his wives and children over? Hence I.E. interprets that Scripture tells us that Jacob took his wives and children over but prior to this he had gone over himself (to see if it was safe for the others to pass-Nachmanides). Scripture then resumes the narrative by relating, And he took them and sent them over the stream, and sent over that which he had (Cherez). He then returned and took his wives and children and brought them over the ford. Thus the meaning of and passed over is and he had already passed over. He then went back for a final look to see if anything was forgotten. 45 After taking his family across the river Jacob went back for a final look. Hence he was left alone.

Verse 24

Verse 25

AND THERE WRESTLED A MAN. Va-ye'avek (and there wrestled) comes from the same root as avak (dust). They struggled so that dust arose between them.
UNTIL THE BREAKING OF THE DAY. Ad alot ha-shachar (until the breaking of the day) means until the darkness of the night went away. 46 I.E. interprets alot (breaking) to mean go up, i.e., to depart, and shacher (dawn) to mean darkness, for this is what the root of shachar means. Others say that shachar (dawn) refers to the image of light that appears in the clouds before sunrise. 47 According to this interpretation shachar means dawn and alot the rising. Alot ha-shachar thus means the breaking of dawn. Shacher (light) in wherein there is no light (shacher) (Is. 8:20) is similar.

Verse 26

THAT HE PREVAILED NOT AGAINST HIM. The angel against Jacob.
HE TOUCHED THE HOLLOW OF HIS THIGH. Jacob's thigh.
WAS STRAINED. Va-teka (was strained) is similar to teka (be moved) 48 It comes from the root yod, kof, ayin and means was moved (Cherez, Weiser). J.P.S. renders it as alienated. in Lest My soul be moved (teka) from thee (Jer. 6:8). The hollow of Jacob's thigh moved out of its place.

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

THE SINEW OF THE THIGH-VEIN. The meaning of the term gid ha-nasheh (the sinew of the thigh-vein) is known from the tradition received and transmitted to us by the Talmudic sages. 49 Chullin 91a. The rabbis interpret gid na-nasheh to mean the sinew that slipped from its place. No one but those lacking in understanding and knowledge of nature have any doubt as to its definition. The latter interpret gid (sinew) to refer to the penis and hold that nassheh (thigh-vein) comes from the same root as nashim (women). 50 There was an anti-Rabbinic interpretation that explained the prohibition against eating the gid ha-nashah as follows:

Therefore the children of Israel do not engage (eat) in abnormal intercourse with women (gid ha-nasheh). According to Krinsky it is this interpretation which I.E. negates. Note, the angel that appeared to Jacob was corporeal. 51 This translation follows Vat. Ebr. 38. It reads, ve-da (note). The printed text reads, la-da'at (to know). This will be explained to you, if God will enlighten you, in the chapter that begins, for My name is in him (Ex. 23:21).

Chapter 33

Verse 1

Verse 2

[AND RACHEL AND JOSEPH HINDERMOST.] He placed Rachel and Joseph last so that they might possibly escape. Jacob did this because of his great love for them.

Verse 3

Verse 4

[AND KISSED HIM.] The Midrashic interpretation concerning the dots on ve-yishakehu 1 Va-yishakehu has dots over it According to a Midrashic opinion this indicates that Esau did not kiss Jacob wholeheartedly. Cf. Yalkut Shimoni on this verse. (and kissed him) is good for them that are drawn from the breasts. 2 That is, children. The term used by I.E. is taken from Is. 28:9. It is obvious from the plain meaning of the text that Esau did not intend to harm Jacob, the proof being and they wept, as Joseph did with his brethren. 3 He kissed them and cried (Gen. 45:15). An alternate interpretation is, as Joseph did with his brother Benjamin (Ibid. v. 14).

Verse 5

WHO ARE THESE WITH THEE. Mi eleh lakh can be interpreted as meaning who are these with thee, or who are these who are yours. 4 That is, who are these who are obviously yours. I.E. points out that lakh can be interpreted as meaning immekha (with you) or shellekha (yours). Esau knew that these women and children belonged to Jacob. What he wanted to know was their relationship to him; were they servants or children (Cherez). GRACIOUSLY GIVEN. Chanan means gave graciously. 5 Chanan usually means to show favor to, to be gracious to. Hence I.E. explains that here chanan means gave graciously. Grant them graciously (channunu) unto us (Jud. 21:22) is similar. 6 Here, too, chanan has the meaning of to graciously give. The word chinnam 7 This is the reading of Vat. Ebr. 38. Most of the printed texts have chanan. This reading is impossible to interpret. I.E.'s point is that chinnam comes from the root chet, nun, nun and means something gotten gratis (Filwarg, Weiser). (gratuitously) comes from the same root. 8 Chanan and chinnam both come from the root chet, nun, nun. See note 7.

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

WHAT MEANEST THOU. The word mi (what) 9 Mi (what) usually means who. always refers to a person. The meaning of our clause 10 Mi le-khah kol ha-machneh ha-zeh literally means: who to thee all this camp? This lends itself to the two interpretations offered by I.E. is: to whom did you send this gift, or whom were you thinking of when you sent this gift.

Verse 9

Verse 10

NAY, I PRAY THEE. I pray my lord not to so speak. 11 Al na (nay, I pray thee) is short for al na yomar adoni ken (I pray my lord not to so speak) (Weiser). I have previously noted Rabbi Samuel Ha-Nagid's interpretation of the term al (nay). 12 Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 19:18.
AS ONE SEETH THE FACE OF GOD. The face of an angel. Many of the commentators explain that the angel with whom Jacob wrestled came to encourage him not to lose heart and fear Esau. For if an angel could not overcome him, certainly no human could. The word sarita (thou hast striven), in thou hast striven (sarita) with (im) God (Gen. 32:29), 13 It does not mean prince over. It means thou has become a prince. I.E. does not interpret sarita to mean strove. Since Jacob alluded to the angel in his comments to Esau, I.E. now goes back and concludes his comments on that incident which is reported in the previous chapter. does not mean the same as va-yaser 14 Although both roots are related. Cf. D.B.G., Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Hebrew Language, Oxford, 1968. (was prince) in And Abimelech was prince (va-yasar) over (al) Israel (Jud. 9:22), because im (with) is not the same as al (over). Our phrase (Gen. 32:29) means that you are considered a prince among the angels, and also among human princes. 15 I.E. interprets sarita as, you have become a sar, a prince; im Elohim, among angels; ve-im anashim, and among human princes. Some ask, what does Scripture mean by And the sun rose upon him (Gen. 32:32) when the sun rises all over the world at the same time? 16 The Hebrew implies it shone upon him but not upon other places. Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 78:8, "Did the sun rise only for him?" This is a nonsensical question because the sun rises at different times in different places. For example, there is a difference of one and a third hours in sunrise and also twelve degrees in latitude between Jerusalem and the place where I wrote this commentary, namely the city of Lucca. 17 A northern Italian city and capital of a Lombard duchy. Its Jewish community was among the most important in northern Italy, and it was one of the three northern Italian communities mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela (c. 1165). See Introduction. This thing is certain and beyond doubt. The meaning of tzole 'a (and he limped) (Gen. 32:32) is, he walked on one side. 18 I.E. explains tzela as a side (see his comments on Gen. 2:21). Tzole 'a is a denominative. A healthy person walks straight, a sick person leans on one side (Cherez). The meaning of al ken (therefore) (Gen. 32:33) is, in commemoration of this thing. 19 In commemoration of Jacob's victory over the angel, or of God's saving Jacob from being overcome by the angel (Krinsky).

Verse 11

Verse 12

LET US TAKE OUR JOURNEY. Some say that nisah (let us take our journey) is an imperative. 20 According to this interpretation nisah (let us take our journey) means, take your journey. The usual form for let us take our journey is nissa with a dagesh in the samakh, not nisah which does not have a dagesh in the samekh and has a heh at the end. The usual imperative form for take your journey is sa. The commentators quoted by I.E. point out that in the elongated imperative the first letter of the root is vocalized with a chirik and the last with a kamatz, as in shilchah. Cf. Rashi. It is similar to shilchah (send) in Send (shilchah) the lad (Gen. 43:8) 21 An elongated imperative. The usual form of the imperative for send is shelach. and niflu (fall) in Fall (niflu) on us (Hos. 10:8). 22 Most roots having a nun as their first root letter drop the nun in the imperative, thus the imperative of nun, samekh, ayin is sa. I.E. points out that in nun, peh, lamed, the nun does not drop in the imperative. Hence while in nasa the nun normally drops out in the imperative, it does not in the elongated imperative. Hence nisah is similar to niflu.
AND LET US GO. All of us. 23 In contradistinction to nisah, ve-nelekhah (and let us go) which is a plural. I.E. further points out that the meaning of and I will go before thee is: I will not move away from thee (Weiser). Compare Rashi, and I will go before thee, equally with thee. Krinky suggests that I.E.'s interpretation is: even if I perchance go before thee, I will not go far from thee but will keep up with thee. And I will go before thee ; i.e., I will not move away from you. However, it is possible that nisah is similar to va-nissse'ah 24 Nissse'ah in Ezra 8:31 is an elongated first person plural imperfect meaning: we will depart, we will take our journey. The vav prefixed to it changes it to a perfect. Hence va-nisse'ah means: then we departed. I.E. now says nisah in our verse, too, is a first person plural imperfect meaning: let us take our journey. However, he does not explain why there is no dagesh in the samekh. (then we departed) in Then we departed (va-nisse'ah) from the river of Ahava (Ezra 8:31). The meaning of our verse thus is: Let us all take our journey, 25 That is, nisah is a first person plural imperfect. According to the first interpretation our verse reads: Take your journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee; according to the second: Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee. and I will go before thee.

Verse 13

THE CHILDREN ARE TENDER. The oldest was twelve years and some days old. 26 Jacob spent 20 years in Laban's house. He was unmarried for the first seven years, after which he married Leah. Thus Reuben, Jacob's eldest son, could not have been much older than 12.
GIVING SUCK. Alot (giving suck) is similar to alot (pregnant) in and gently leadeth those that are pregnant (alot) (Is. 40:11). 27 This is how I.E. renders alot. The usual translation of alot is: those that give suck. It means pregnant cattle. They are called alot because the he-goats went up (alu) on them. 28 Mounted them. This applies to the other kinds as well. I.E. is merely using the language of Scripture, viz., the he-goats which leaped (mounted) upon the flock (Gen. 31:10). The point is that pregnant animals are called alot because they were mounted by male animals.

The meaning of alai 29 The Hebrew literally reads: upon me. (are a care to me) is that I have to care for them that no harm befall them.
AND IF THEY OVERDRIVE THEM. If the drivers 30 The "they" is not identified in the text Hence I.E. points out that it refers to the drivers. overdrive them, then all the flock will die.

Verse 14

AND I WILL JOURNEY ON. This is to be understood as, and I will journey on with them.
GENTLY. The yod of le'itti (gently) is either superfluous 31 The word for gently or slowly being le'at. Hence the yod of le'itti is superfluous. or is a first person pronominal suffix. 32 Meaning at my ease or at my slow pace.
ACCORDING TO THE PACE OF THE CATTLE. Because of the cattle, whose care is my work. 33 Melakhah usually means work. I.E. explains why it refers to cattle here. I believe that the meaning of melakhah is what a person can do by himself or through his agent. 34 I.E. does not disagree with his original point that melakhah here refers to cattle. He now expands on the meaning of the word (Filwarg). According to the first interpretation "work" refers to cattle because Jacob's work was taking care of cattle. According to the second interpretation "work" can refer directly to cattle, for one's possessions are one's work. Also, one's property is called melakhah, as in whether he have not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods (melekhet) (Ex. 22:7). The word messenger (malakh) comes from the same root. A malakh (messenger) is so called because he is under the control of the one who sends him. The meaning of the word regel (the pace) is the same as le-ragli (because of me), 35 Le-regel (according to the pace) means because. Although the basic meaning of melachah is changed in the second interpretation, the meaning of le-regel (because) remains unchanged. as in and the Lord hath blessed thee because of me (le-ragli) (Gen. 30:30). 36 I.E.'s interpretation of Gen. 30:30. However, it is possible that le-regel should be taken literally, since Jacob led the animals on foot. 37 Since melakhah means cattle, why not interpret regel literally as meaning feet, since the animals walked, viz., according to the pace (foot) of the cattle.

Verse 15

[WHAT NEEDETH IT?] I have no need of it. 38 The Hebrew reads, lammah zeh emtzah chen be-ene adoni. This can be rendered: why then shall I find favor in the eyes of my lord? I.E. explains that this is not the way to interpret the verse. Lammah zeh is not to be connected to emtza chen, etc. The verse is to be interpreted: lammah zeh, why this? That is, why do this when I have no need of it? Emtza chen be-ene adoni is another clause meaning: I merely want to find favor in your eyes (Weiser, Krinsky). Cf. Rashi.

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

AND JACOB CAME IN PEACE. Shalem (peace) is an adjective. 39 Shalem can be taken to be the name of a place, Salem. Hence I.E.'s comment. The meaning

of our clause is, Jacob came in peace to Shechem; i.e., no misfortune befell him on the way. Scripture notes this because it is about to tell of what happened to Dinah. 40 That is why Scripture notes that up to now no misfortune befell him.

Verse 19

THE PARCEL OF GROUND. A portion in the field. 41 I.E. explains that Jacob did not buy the parcel of ground where he had spread his tent. He rather bought a portion in the field where he had spread his tent. Scripture mentions this 42 That Jacob bought, not rented, a parcel of land. to inform us of the greatness of the land of Israel. Whosoever has a portion in it is as though he had a portion in the world to come.

Verse 20

[AND CALLED IT EL-ELOHE-ISRAEL.] 43 God, the God of Israel. Saadiah explained that and called it El-elohe-Israel means, He called to the Lord, "El-elohe-Israel." 44 The word lo can mean either it or him. Saadiah had difficulty in accepting that Jacob called the altar God, the God of Israel. Hence he did not interpret lo as meaning it, i.e., the altar, but rather as Him, i.e., God. He interprets our verse as: And called to Him, God, God of Israel (Krinsky). For a slightly different interpretation see Cherez. However, the correct interpretation is that he called the altar El-elohe-Israel (God, the God of Israel). Moses similarly called the altar he erected Adonai-nissi (the Lord is my banner) (Ex. 17:15) because of the miracle God performed in that place. Similarly, when the Divine Presence will once again return to Jerusalem, the city will be called Adonai-shammah (the Lord is there) (Ezek. 48:35). Jacob similarly called the altar whereupon he served the Lord, El-elohe-Israel (God, the God of Israel) because God came to his aid. The name El (God) means the One who is powerful and mighty. 45 God thereby demonstrated His might Therefore, Jacob called him El, mighty and powerful.
ELOHE-ISRAEL. He saved him on the way and ensured his safe arrival in Canaan, where Succoth 46 Verse 17. and Shechem are located. 47 Where Jacob now camped. I believe that Jacob spent many years in the city of Shechem, for at the time of Jacob's arrival in Shechem, Dinah was less than seven years old and also Simeon and Levi were yet small children. 48 Jacob stayed in Laban's house for 20 years. He married Leah and Rachel after seven years, and with the exception of Benjamin, all of his children were born in the next seven years (cf. I.E. on Gen. 30:23). Reuben, his eldest, was a little over 12. Simeon and Levi, the next two in order, a bit younger. Dinah, who was born in the 14th year of Jacob's service to Laban, had to be under seven. The question thus arises, could what is described in Chapter 34 apply to such a little girl? Dinah is described as a young lady of age. Furthermore, could children of Simeon and Levi's age, preadolescents, overcome and slay a city? Could pre-adolescents act and talk the way Jacob's sons are described as doing in Chapter 34? I.E. thus suggests that many years passed between the end of Chapter 33 and Chapter 34. During these years Jacob's children had grown. It should be noted that in putting forth this interpretation I.E. is taking issue with the Midrash which states that Simeon and Levi were 13 when they destroyed Shechem. Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 80.

Chapter 34

Verse 1

AND DINAH WENT OUT. Of her own accord. 1 She did not ask her parents' permission (Krinsky). Filwarg asks, "How does I.E. know this?"

Verse 2

AND HUMBLED HER. He had normal intercourse with her. 2 Contra Rashi who interprets humbled as sodomized. Scripture uses the term va-ye'anneha (and humbled her) 3 The root ayin, nun, heh means to afflict. Thus va-ye'anneha (and he humbled her) means he afflicted her. Hence I.E.'s interpretation. because she was a virgin. 4 Intercourse was thus painful, hence the term afflicted her.

Verse 3

AND SPOKE COMFORTINGLY UNTO THE DAMSEL. He spoke tenderly and comfortingly to her.

Verse 4

Verse 5

THAT HE HAD DEFILED. That Shechem had defiled.

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

A REPROACH. It will be a reproach for generations. 5 Cherez interprets I.E. to mean that future generations will look down upon us. They will ask, how could they give their sister to an uncircumcised man? This is the meaning of because he had wrought a vile deed in Israel (v. 7). 6 According to I.E. the vile deed refers to having intercourse with an uncircumcised male (Weiser). Israel in verse 7 refers to a later time when there was a people of Israel. It was then shameful to recall that Dinah had slept with an uncircumcised man (Joseph ben Eliezer Ha-Sephardi).
[13. AND SPOKE BECAUSE HE HAD DEFILED.] And spoke to Shechem who had (asher) defiled their sister. 7 The Hebrew reads: va-yedabberu, asher timme et dinah achotam which literally means: and they spoke who had defiled Dinah their sister. This makes no sense. Hence I.E. points out that Shechem, who is mentioned in the first part of the verse (et shechem), is also the object here. We should thus read it as if it were written: va-yedabberu et shechem asher timme et dinah achotam, viz., and spoke to Shechem who had defiled their sister. It should be noted that according to this interpretation, asher means who. We may interpret our verse in this manner because we find Scripture stating, dabbero le-shalom (Gen. 37:4), which is to be rendered: speak peaceably unto him (Gen. 37:4). 8 I.E. claims that dabber et Shechem is grammatically similar to dabbero. For an explanation of their linguistic similarity see Filwarg. See also notes to Gen. 37:4. For alternate interpretations see Weiser, Cherez and Krinsky. On the other hand asher may mean because. In this case the Bible is telling us that they answered with guile because (asher) he had defiled Dinah their sister. 9 Cherez.
TO ONE THAT IS UNCIRCUMCISED. One whose sexual member is uncircumcised. 10 The Hebrew literally reads: to one who has an orlah, hence I.E.'s interpretation. The meaning of the term orlah (uncircumcised) is something which is heavy. Aral (uncircumcised), in uncircumcised (aral) lips (Ex. 6:12), and arelah (dull), in their ear is dull (arelah) (Jer. 6:10), are similar. An orlah is something which lays heavy because it is an unnecessary appendage. 11 Krinsky. In the case of the foreskin the heaviness is physical. In the case of lips and ears, metaphoric. I.E. renders "uncircumcised lips" as heavy lips. There is, as it were, a burden on the lips which makes speaking difficult. The same applies to the ears. Those who say that Abraham blemished himself by undergoing circumcision, and thereby violated God's charge to him, and be thou whole (Gen. 17:1), err. The opposite is true. 12 By circumcision Abraham became "whole." His impediment was removed. So Cherez and Filwarg. For an alternate interpretation see Weiser. Proof of this can be offered from the animal kingdom. 13 Animals have no foreskin. We thus see that it is an unnecessary appendage. As to their query, why remove that which God created, we respond that God also created the umbilical cord. 14 We thus see that God created appendages that require removal (Weiser).

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

OUR DAUGHTER. They spoke thus because she was a minor. 15 Since Dinah was a minor they could threaten, then we will take our daughter, and we will be gone. They referred to Dinah as our daughter because they spoke on behalf of Jacob.

Verse 18

Verse 19

DEFERRED NOT. Echar (deferred) is not of the same grammatical form as va-echar (and stayed) in and stayed (va-echar) until now (Gen. 32:5). 16 Both words look alike and are identically vocalized. Our word is a third person pi'el perfect following the paradigm of berakh (did curse) in Naboth did curse (berakh) God and the King (I Kings 21:13). 17 However, echar in Gen. 32:5 is a first person kal imperfect (Weiser). Here the alef is a root letter. In Gen. 32:5 the root alef is missing, for the alef therein is a first person kal prefix (Filwarg).

Verse 20

Verse 21

PEACEABLE. They are at peace. 18 In other words, shelemim (peaceable) is an adjective (Weiser, Krinsky).
LARGE ENOUGH. Yadayim (enough) 19 I.E. renders rachavat yadayim (large enough) as large places, i.e., the land is large enough for both of us. is to be rendered places, as in Thou shalt have a place (yad) (Deut. 23:13).

Verse 22

WILL THE MEN CONSENT. Ye'otu (consent) comes from the same root as ya'atah (befitteth) in For it befitteth (ya'atah) Thee (Jer. 10:7). 20 According to I.E. its root is yod, alef, tav (Krinsky). The yod prefix is vocalized with a tzere 21 Rather than a chirik (Cherez). to compensate for the missing first root letter. 22 The yod.
BE CIRCUMCISED. The word be-himmol (be circumcised) has already been explained. 23 Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 17:10. Shechem and Hamor had evil designs on Jacob and his sons for they said, Shall not their cattle and their substance and all their beasts be ours (v. 22)? 24 They had intentions of later robbing them of their possessions. Thus both sides plotted against each other (Weiser).

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

ON THE THIRD DAY. The third day is always a difficult day because it is half of a monthly quarter. 25 It is half a week which is a quarter of the month (Weiser). The astrologers count the days from the afternoon. Hence the fourth day begins after the noon of the third day has passed. The time between noon and sunset of the third day is called half the monthly quarter (Krinsky). Simeon and Levi acted with the full consent of their brothers. This is clear from And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and

Hamor his father with guile (v. 13). The “sons of Jacob” 26 The reference is to verse 13 (Krinsky, Cherez). Weiser suggests that the reference is to verse 27 wherein it is stated, The sons of Jacob came upon the slain and spoiled the city. refers to all of the brothers. Jacob spilled his anger on Simeon and Levi because they killed the men of Shechem 27 While the others merely looted the city, Simeon and Levi killed its male inhabitants (Weiser). Cherez explains that the others merely wanted to save Dinah. They did not intend to kill the men of Shechem.

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

EVEN ALL THAT WAS IN THE HOUSE. This refers either to the house of Shechem or Hamor. 28 “House” is in the singular, hence I.E.’s comment (Krinsky).

Verse 30

FEW IN NUMBER. Mete (few) means men. Anything that can be numbered is deemed a few. 29 I.E. renders mete mispar (few in number) as men of number, i.e., few men. Hence Rabbi Aaron Ha-Kohen, dean of the Yeshiva, 30 Head of the academy in Pumpeditha. Hai Gaon was among his students (Weiser). errs in rendering literally vi-yehi metav mispar (in that his men became few) (Deut. 33:6). 31 Rabbi Aaron renders Deut. 33:6, and let his men be numbered. I.E. renders this verse: and let his men not be men who can be numbered.
TO MAKE ME ODIOUS. 32 Literally, to make me stink, hence I.E.’s comment. They will hate me as one loathes something which gives off a horrible odor.

Verse 31

AND THEY SAID. Simeon and Levi.
SHOULD ONE DEAL WITH OUR SISTER AS WITH A HARLOT. Should Shechem deal with our sister as with a harlot. 33 The subject is missing in the sentence, hence I.E.’s comment.

Chapter 35

Verse 1

Verse 2

PUT AWAY THE STRANGE GODS. Heaven forbid that the prophet would live with women who served strange gods. 1 Our verse reads: Then Jacob said unto

his household, and to all that were with him, “Put away the strange gods that are among you.” This implies that his wives had strange gods. The explanation of this verse will be found in the Torah portion va-yelekh moshe (And Moses went). 2 Cf. I.E.’s comments on Deut. 31:16.
AND PURIFY YOURSELVES. Wash your bodies.
AND CHANGE YOUR GARMENTS. From this verse we learn that an Israelite must have a clean body and spotless garments when he goes to pray in a place set aside for worship.

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

A TERROR OF. The tav of chittat (terror of) receives a dagesh to compensate for the missing root letter, the tav. 3 The root of chittat is chet, tav, tav, but it is spelled with one tav. The dagesh compensates for the missing letter.

Verse 6

Verse 7

[BECAUSE THERE GOD WAS REVEALED TO HIM.] Elohim (God) refers to angels. 4 Revealed (niglu) is in the plural. If elohim meant God then revealed would be in the singular (Cherez). Compare, And behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it (Gen. 28:12). 5 Elohim in our verse refers to the same angels whom Jacob saw in Beth-el (Gen. 28:12).

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

THY NAME SHALL NOT BE CALLED ANYMORE JACOB. You shall no longer be called only Jacob but also Israel.

Verse 11

BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY. This is a blessing as in the account of the Creation. 6 Cf. I.E.’s comments on Gen. 1:26.

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

[AND JACOB SET UP A PILLAR.] This may be a pluperfect meaning Jacob had already set up a pillar. 7 Cf. Gen. 28:18, 22. On the other hand, Jacob may now have set up a pillar a second time. I prefer the first interpretation. 8 I.E. prefers to believe that Jacob used the pillar which he had set up previously in Beth-el.
AND HE POURED OUT A DRINK-OFFERING THEREON. He poured wine or water on the pillar. Jacob first washed the pillar with wine or water 9 I.E.'s interpretation of and poured out a drink-offering thereon. and then poured oil thereon. Here at Beth-el Jacob kept his vow 10 Cf. Gen. 28:20. This is not explicitly stated in Scripture. I.E. assumes that it must have been so. and gave a tithe of his wealth in honor of God to a contemporary who was worthy to receive it. 11 Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 28:22.

Verse 15

Verse 16

SOME WAY. It is possible that the caf of kivrat (some way) is a preposition meaning similar to 12 In other words, kivrat (some way) is to be interpreted ki-verat, as a brat. and that brat is a distance measured by walking. 13 This is the reading in Vat. Ebr. 38. The printed editions read: a king's measure. The word does not appear elsewhere in Scripture. 14 The word kivrat does appear in II Kings 5:19. Krinsky suggests that I.E. means it doesn't appear elsewhere in the Pentateuch. Cherez maintains that I.E. means that the word berat is not found in Scripture.

Verse 17

WHEN SHE WAS IN HARD LABOR. Be-hakshotah (when she was in hard) is a hifil. The meaning of be-hakshotah be-lidtah (when she was in hard labor) is: the delivery caused her pain. 15 Hifil is a causative form. If this is the case then be-hakshotah must be transitive, hence I.E.'s comment that it means caused her hardship. Cf. Kimchi. Va-tekash (and she had hard labor, in v. 16) is similar. 16 It, too, is an active form and is to be explained as in note 15. However the latter is a pi'el. Va-tekash is similar to va-tekhal (and she was done) in And when she had done (va-tekhal) giving him drink (Gen. 24:19). 17 Both words are shortened forms of the pi'el. Va-tekash is short for va-tekasheh as va-tekhal is short for va-tekhalleh.

Verse 18

BEN-ONI. Ben-oni means the son of my mourning. Onim (mourners) in as the bread of mourners (onim) (Hos. 9:4) and be-oni (my mourning) in I have not eaten thereof in my mourning (be-oni) (Deut. 26:14) are similar.

Verse 19

Verse 20

HER GRAVE. Kevuratah (her grave) and kivrah (her grave) mean the same. 18 Kever means a grave, kevurah a burial, and kevuratah her burial. Thus our verse should have read kivrah (her grave) and not kevuratah (her burial) since Jacob erected a monument over Rachel's grave. I.E. points out that kevuratah can also have the same meaning as kivrah (Krinsky).

Verse 21

Verse 22

THAT REUBEN WENT. Our sages explained this beautifully; 19 According to the rabbis Reuben did not actually lay with Billah but rather removed his father's couch from her tent and placed it in the tent of his mother Leah. Scripture considers this act of audacity as if he had actually slept with her. Cf. Sabbath 55b. for a prudent man concealeth shame (Prov. 12:16).

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

THAT WERE BORN TO HIM IN PADDAN-ARAM. Actually only eleven sons were born to Jacob in Paddan-aram 20 The problem is that our verse states that all of Jacob's sons were born in Paddanaram, when in fact this was not so. for Benjamin was born in the land of Canaan. Scripture speaks of the majority of his sons. 21 These are the sons of Jacob, that were born to him in Paddan-aram refers to the majority of his sons. I will in the future point out many similar cases. 22 Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 47:27.

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

AND ISAAC EXPIRED. When Isaac died and was gathered to his people Easu and Jacob buried him. 23 Chronologically speaking Isaac did not die at this point for he lived until Joseph was 29 years of age (see I.E. on Gen. 37:35). Scripture notes the death of Isaac here because it will no longer deal with him (Filwarg). Thus And Isaac expired, and died should be rendered: And when Isaac expired and died, etc. (Krinsky). Scripture mentions Esau 24 Even though Esau sold his birthright to Jacob and was no longer technically the eldest. before Jacob because the Pentateuch

follows the order of their birth. However, in relating the burial of Abraham the Bible reads, And Isaac and Ishmael 25 If the Torah follows the order of birth then Ishmael should be mentioned first. his sons buried him (Gen. 25:9) because Ishmael was the son of a handmaid.

Chapter 36

Verse 1

THE SAME IS EDOM. He is the father of Edom. 1 The Hebrew literally reads, he is Edom, which I.E., based on verse 9, interprets as, he is the father of Edom (Krinsky). Filwarg interprets it as, both Esau and his descendants are called Edom. Our verse teaches that Esau is Edom and verse 9 (which reads, Esau the father of the Edomites) that Esau's descendants are called Edom. Do not be surprised that Scripture here calls the daughter of Elon the Hittite whom Esau married Adah, while earlier it refers to her by the name of Basemath (Gen. 26:34), for she had two names. 2 See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 26:34. We find the same with the mother of Abijah. 3 I Kings 15:2 and II Chron. 11:20 gives her name as Maacah; II Chron. 13:2 gives her name as Micaiah. Indeed, Abijah himself (II Chron. 11:20) is called Abijam in the Book of Kings (I Kings 15:1) and Abijah in Chronicles (II Chron. 11:20). 4 According to Krinsky. For an alternate interpretation see Weiser and Cherez. The Bible refers to them by two different names because both Abijah and his mother had two names each.
These are the names of Esau's sons (v. 10) refers to his grandchildren. 5 Esau's children are listed in verses 4 and 5, his descendants in verses 10-18. Hence the introduction to this list, viz., These are the names of Esau's sons, must refer to his grandchildren. Krinsky suggests that there is a scribal error and that the reference is to And these are the generations of Esau in verse 9.

Verse 2

AND OHOLIBAMAH THE DAUGHTER OF ANAH, THE DAUGHTER OF ZIBEON THE HIVITE. We find in our chapter a man called Anah who is the brother of Zibeon (v. 20). We further read that Zibeon had a son called Anah (v. 24). Our verse thus relates that Zibeon and his son Anah, or perhaps Zibeon and his brother Anah, slept with the same woman and the offspring did not know who their father was. 6 Hence the Bible lists two men, Anah and Zibeon, as being Oholibamah's father. However, it is also possible that Oholibamah was the daughter of Anah the son of Zibeon, and Scripture lists her as being the daughter of Anah and Zibeon in order to distinguish between Anah the son of Zibeon and Anah the brother of Zibeon. 7 Had Scripture merely said, "Oholibamah daughter of Anah" we would not know which Anah the Bible is talking about. Cherez explains that Scripture could state that Oholibamah was Zibeon's daughter, when in fact she was his granddaughter because grandchildren are considered children. Some say that our chapter speaks of a Korah the son of Adah 8 Verses 15 and 16 list the chiefs of the sons of Esau from his wife Adah, among them the chief of Korah. Thus Korah must be Adah's son. and Korah the son of Oholibamah. 9 In verse 14 it is related that Oholibamah bore Korah. Thus our chapter speaks of two Korahs. However, I believe that both are one and the same person. Korah was the son of Oholibamah. The reason he is listed among the chiefs of Eliphaz 10 Adah's son. See note 8. is that he lived among them. It is also possible, since he was Oholibamah's youngest son, that his mother died when he was still a child and that Adah raised him along with her own family and Scripture includes

him with her children. Our case is similar to the five sons of Michal (II Sam. 21:8). 11 The five sons of Michal were really the children of Merab. Cf. San. 19b., “Michal bore these five children? Did not Merab give birth to them?” The Talmud answers, “Merab bore them but Michal raised them. Hence they are called her children.” Korah thus became Adah’s son. Scripture similarly says that Amalek was a son of Adah 12 Verse 16 lists the chief of Amalek among the children of Adah. However, verse 12 states, And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau’s son and she bore to Eliphaz Amalek. Thus Amalek was the son of Timna, not the son of Adah. because he was the son of the handmaid of her husband. 13 This comment presents a problem. Verse 12 state that Timna was Eliphaz’s concubine, not Esau’s concubine. Cherez posits a scribal error; i.e., in place of her husband, read her son. Weiser suggests that I.E. had a tradition that Timna was first Esau’s concubine and then Eliphaz’s concubine, hence I.E.’s statement, “concubine of her husband.” The Bible lists Amalek among Adah’s children because Adah helped raise him (Weiser).
[CHIEF.] The meaning of alluf is a prince or chief. However, this is not the meaning of alluf (docile) 14 I.E. translates alluf as ox. Ke-kheves alluf does not mean like a great sheep, but rather like a lamb or like an ox. in ke-kheves alluf (like a docile lamb) (Jer. 11:19). In the latter verse the caf prefixed to keves (lamb) also pertains to alluf ; i.e., the verse is to be read as if written ke-kheves ke-alluf (like a lamb, like an ox). The latter is normal Hebrew usage, 15 It is normal Hebrew usage to place two cafs in succession, meaning like this or like that. as can be seen in I went about as though it had been my friend (ke-re’a) or my brother (ke-ach) (Ps. 35:14).

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

SEIR. We do not know his pedigree. Scripture lists the children of Seir to inform us that they were of a different lineage from the children of Esau. The Bible notes this because Israel was prohibited from contending with the children of Esau. 16 Cf. Deut. 2:4-5. This prohibition did not apply to the Seirites. Both nations inhabited the same country. However, the children of Esau displaced them (Deut. 2:22).
THE HORITE. Chori (Horite) means nobles. It is similar to chore (nobles) in the nobles (chore) of Judah (Jer. 27:20). 17 According to I.E. These are the sons of Seir the Horite (ha-chori) should be translated: These are the sons of Seir the noble (the chief). It is possible that chori (Horites) comes from the same root as chorai in And they that weave cotton (chorai) (Is. 19:9), in which chorai means white stuff. Onkelos similarly renders white by chivvar. 18 So Cherez. Weiser renders I.E. as follows: the Targum (Jonathan) similarly translates chore to mean nobles. Nobles are called chorim (the white ones) because they are metaphorically speaking, like the color white, 19 It is the most beautiful color. a color which resembles light. 20 A symbol of good and purity. In contrast to chorim, mean men are called chashukkim (dark ones), as we read in He shall not stand before mean men (chashukkim) (Prov. 22:29). 21 In Prov. 22:29 chashukkim is the antithesis of kings. Chashukkim comes from the word choshekh (black or dark). We thus see that white is a symbol of nobility, and black of poverty (Cherez) or of non-nobility, of meanness (Weiser).

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

AIAH AND ANAH. The vav prefixed to Aiah has the same meaning as the Arabic fa. 22 The Hebrew has a vav before Aiah. If this vav is a connective vav we should translate: And these are the children of Zibeon and Aiah and Anah. I.E. points out that the vav before Aiah is not to be translated. It is superfluous and is placed for emphasis (Weiser). We have a similar clause without a vav prefixed to Aiah 23 I Chron. 1:40 reads, And the sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah. in Chronicles (I Chron. 1:40).
THE HOT SPRINGS. Onkelos renders yemim (hot springs) mighty men as in The Emim dwelt therein aforetime, a people great, and many, and tall (Deut. 2:10). 24 The Emim were mighty men. Onkelos identifies the Yemin with them. It is possible to compare the two because we find the yod and alef interchanging 25 Hence yemim equals emim. Nachmanides explains that Onkelos held that Anah was attacked by Emem, who wanted to rob his father's asses, and overcame them. Thus he found the Emim in the wilderness as he fed the asses of Zibeon, his father. as with the word yityammeru (bear themselves loftily) (Ps. 94:4). 26 There is no such word in Scripture. However, we do find tityammaru (shall ye revel) (Is. 61:6). Either we have a scribal error (Krinsky) and what I.E. is saying is that tityammaru could have been written titammeru since Ps. 94:4 employs the term yitammeru (bear themselves loftily), or I.E. is saying that Ps. 94:4 could have read yityammeru since Is. 61:6 reads tityammaru (Weiser). Spelled with a yod or an alef it means to exalt. However, Saadiah Gaon translates yemim as mules. He interprets who found to mean who crossbred. 27 He crossbred a horse and an ass and "found" mules. This is also the opinion of the Talmud. Cf. Jerusalem Talmud, Berakhot 8:5. It is also possible that who found means who first discovered the technique of crossbreeding, since two different species cannot produce offspring. 28 Hence crossbreeding was a new discovery. The latter interpretation is substantiated by Scripture's stating, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father. 29 Since he was occupied with taking care of the asses, he experimented and discovered this technique. If the meaning of yemim is plants, as is maintained by many commentators, why should Scripture mention as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father? 30 If the Bible wants to tell us that Anah found a certain type of plant (yemim) in the desert, what need is there to tell us that he did this as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father?

Verse 25

AND THESE ARE THE CHILDREN OF ANAH: DISHON AND OHOLIBAMAH THE DAUGHTER OF ANAH. Anah the father of Oholibamah is not the same Anah mentioned in the first part of our verse, 31 If they are one and the same person Scripture should have read: And these are the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah. because if he is, there would be no need to mention him

again. He is rather to be identified with the Anah mentioned in the preceding verse. 32 Anah the son of Zibeon mentioned in verse 24. The Anah mentioned in the first part of our verse is Anah the brother of Zibeon mentioned in verse 20. Thus Oholibamah was Zibeon's granddaughter (Krinsky). Cf. I.E.'s comments on verse 2.

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

AND THESE ARE THE KINGS. Some say that this chapter records a prophecy. 33 Our verse reads, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel. Saul was Israel's first king. Thus our chapter appears to deal with the post Mosaic period. These commentaries explain that Moses wrote our chapter as prophecy. However, Yitzchaki 34 Some identify him with Isaac ben Solomon Israeli (c. 850-950). He was a philosopher, Biblical commentator and court physician to the caliphs in Egypt and Kairouan. claims in his book that this chapter was composed during the reign of King Jehoshaphat. 35 A ninth-century king of Judah. Jehoshaphat was the eighth Hebrew king to reign starting from Saul. In his days the Edomites no longer had kings for they were subject to Judah. This is the reason that once the eighth Hebrew king ascended the throne it was written that the Edomites, too, had eight kings. He explained the generations as he saw fit. Was he not rightly named Yitzchak? 36 A play on Gen. 27:36. Everyone that heareth his interpretation will laugh at him. 37 A play on Gen. 21:6. For he identified Hadar (v. 39) with Hadad the Edomite (I Kings 11:14) 38 A contemporary of King Solomon. and also said that Mehetabel (v. 39) is to be identified with the sister of Tahpenes the queen of Egypt. 39 Pharaoh gave his wife Tahpenes' sister to Hadad in marriage. Far be it for one to believe that our chapter was written in the days of Jehoshaphat as Yitzchaki maintains. Indeed his book is fit to be burned. Why did Yitzchaki maintain that it is impossible for eight Edomite kings to have reigned before Moses 40 Yitchaki claimed that there were too few years between the establishment of the Edomite kingdom and Moses for eight Edomite kings to reign, for from Esau's death, when the Edomite kingdom was established, until the Revelation at Sinai, when Moses reigned, only 193 years passed. The computation of the 193 years is as follows: The Israelites spent 210 years in Egypt, starting with Jacob's descent to Egypt. Jacob lived there 17 years before he died. Esau died on the very day that Jacob did (Sotah 13a). We thus subtract 17 from 210 and we get 193 (Cherez). when we find double the number of kings in Israel in about the same number of years? 41 The kingdom of Israel

lasted for 241 years during which time Israel had 19 kings (Krinsky). I.E. says that Israel had double the number of kings of the Edomites. Either he uses a round number or does not count Zimri (I Kings 16:15) who reigned seven days; Zechariah (II Kings 15:8) who reigned six months; and Shallum who reigned a month (Ibid., v. 13). Thus Israel had 16 kings in 241 years. Why, then, is it so hard to believe that eight Edomite kings reigned in 193 years (Krinsky)? Cherez explains that the first 16 kings of Israel reigned 210 years. Thus Israel had 16 kings in 210 years. Furthermore, there were also proportionally many more kings of Judah in the same time period than the eight Edomite kings who reigned till the age of Moses. 42 Judah had 21 kings in 500 years (Krinsky). Hence why couldn't the Edomites have eight kings in 193 years. The truth is that king, in before there reigned any king over the children of Israel, refers to Moses who was king over Israel, and so it is written, And there was a king in Jeshurun (Deut. 33:5).

Verse 32

AND BELA THE SON OF BEOR. Bela is not to be identified with Balaam the son of Beor, 43 Cf. Num. 22:5. Adding a mem to Bela spells Baalam. Because of this and their father having the same name, some consider them to be the same. Cf. Targum Jonathan on this verse. and neither is Baalam the son of Laban the Aramean. 44 The rabbis identify Beor with Laban. Cf. Sanhedrin 105a. The Midrash which states that Baalam is the son of Laban is probably based on the fact that both were sorcerers 45 So Cherez. The point is that since Baalam was a sorcerer and Laban was one, too, Balaam was a "son" (spiritual not actual) of Laban. For an alternate interpretation see Krinsky. because "none of the words of our sages of blessed memory ever fall to the ground." 46 A paraphrase of I Sam. 3:19. We cannot identify Baalam with Bela because Bela was an Edomite and Baalam an Aramean. 47 According to Cherez. We are also not to identify Jobab the son of Zerah (v. 33) with Job, as Yitzchaki 48 This is the same Yitzchaki mentioned in I.E.'s comments on verse 31 (Weiser). the windbag does.

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

Verse 37

Verse 38

Verse 39

MEHETABEL THE DAUGHTER OF MATRED, THE DAUGHTER OF ME-ZAHAB. This is to be explained 49 Scripture lists her as having two fathers, Metrad and Me-zahab. in the same manner as we interpret Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon (v. 2). 50 See I.E.'s comments on verse 2. Metrad was her father and Me-zahab her grandfather (Krinsky). On the other hand Scripture may be listing Mehetabel's mother and father. 51 I.E. does not identify which one was the father and which one the mother (Krinsky).
ME-ZAHAB. This was his name. 52 That is, Me-zahab is a proper name. However, Saadiah Gaon says that Me-Zahab means a goldsmith. 53 Our verse should thus be rendered: Mehetabel the daughter of Matred, the daughter of a goldsmith. Cf. Onkelos. Others say Me-zahab alludes to those who make gold out of copper. 54 That is, Me-zahab means an alchemist. However, the latter is sheer nonsense. 55 The interpretation is nonsense (Cherez) or the belief in alchemy is nonsense (Krinsky).

Verse 40

[AND THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE CHIEFS THAT CAME OF ESAU…AFTER THEIR PLACES] This means that their territories are well-known today (in the days of Moses). These are the words of Moses. 56 That is, verses 40-43. Until now Moses reported what had been Divinely revealed to him concerning Edom's past. In verses 40-43 he turns to his own generation and in his own words adds that the 11 chiefs of Edom (enumerated in verses 40-43) are now ruling each in his own territory. Those now mentioned are the offspring of the chiefs mentioned above. 57 Verses 15-18 (Cherez). Only those that had their own territories are mentioned. 58 In verses 15-18, 14 chiefs are mentioned. In verses 40-43, 11 chiefs are mentioned. The names in verses 40-43 are not the same as those in 15-18. Hence I.E. points out that they were their sons. To explain why only 11 are mentioned in 40-43, I.E. posits that only those with a territory of their own are mentioned. After the death of the 14 mentioned in 15-18 their sons, mentioned in 40-43, became chiefs. Another possibility is that after the 14 mentioned above died, eight kings reigned and then the 11 mentioned in 40-43 became chiefs (Cherez). If the latter is correct, then when I.E. says that those in 40-43 are the offspring of those in 15-18 he means their descendants.
TIMNA. Here it refers to a male. 59 Timna was the name of Eliphaz's concubine (v. 12); hence it is a female name. However, the chief of Timna was a male. Hence Timna can be either a male or female name. For we have many names which are used both for male and females. The same holds true for Oholibamah. 60 Oholibamah was the name of one of Esau's wives (v. 2). Hence it is a female name. However, the chief of Oholibamah was a male. It is also possible that the word chief is superfluous, 61 That is, Timna is a female name and refers to Timna, Eliphaz's concubine. The superfluous chief refers to the word chief prefixed to Alvah and Jetheth. The verse should thus be read: the chief of Timna, Alvah and Jetheth. The same applies to Oholibamah (Krinsky) or the word chief prefixed to Timna is superfluous. The verse should be read: Timna, the chief of Alva, the chief of Jetheth. The same applies to Oholibamah (Weiser). the interpretation of the chief of Timna, the chief of Alvah, the chief Jetheth being, the following are the chiefs of Timna, Eliphaz's concubine, Alvah and Jetheth. Alvah and Jetheth were chiefs of Amelek. 62 Timna bore to Eliphaz Amalek (v. 12). Hence the chiefs of Timna, Alvah and Jetheth were chiefs of Amalek. There were seven chiefs of Oholibamah in the day of Moses. Each of these chiefs had his own territory. Hence Moses was explicit and added, according to their habitations. 63 Each of these chiefs had territories which bore their names and this was noted by Moses.

Chapter 37

Verse 1

AND JACOB DWELT. The Bible tells us 1 In the previous chapter, verse 8. that the chiefs of Esau dwelt on the mountain of Seir but that Jacob dwelt in the chosen land. 2 The purpose of our verse is to teach us that Jacob, in contrast to Esau, dwelt in the land of Israel.

Verse 2

The meaning of These are the generations of Jacob is: these are the events which befell him and the incidents which came upon him. Toledot (generations) comes from the same root as yeled (bring forth) in What a day may bring forth (yeled) (Prov. 27:1). 3 Toledot is not rendered generations but events, as evidenced by the word of the same root, yod, lamed, dalet in Prov. 27:1.
BEING STILL A LAD, EVEN WITH THE SONS OF BILHAH, AND WITH THE SONS OF ZILPAH. The sons of the concubines (the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah) made Joseph their attendant (servant) since he was their younger brother. This was the evil report of them which he brought unto their father. Had the children of Leah, the mistress of the house, made Joseph their attendant, then no wrong would have been done. 4 Joseph would thus not have had any evil report of his brothers to bring unto their father. The view that evil report pertains to limbs torn from living animals is a Midrashic interpretation. 5 According to the Midrash Joseph told his father that his brothers ate limbs torn from living animals. Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 84:7. That Joseph did not bring an evil report to Jacob concerning Leah's children is clear from the fact that Scripture only mentions the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah in our verse. 6 Our verse mentions only the sons of Zilpah and the sons of Bilhah. Hence the pronominal suffix of dibbtam (report of them) must refer to Zilpah and Bilhah's sons. This comment is either a proof of what I.E. wrote above, viz., that Joseph spoke only about the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah (Krinsky), or its purpose is to negate a Midrashic statement to the effect that Joseph spoke ill only of Leah's children, viz., that he told Jacob that Leah's children refer to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah as the children of slave girls (Filwarg).

Verse 3

BECAUSE HE WAS THE SON OF HIS OLD AGE. This is to be taken literally since Joseph was born to Jacob when the latter was ninety-one years old. 7 Joseph was 30 when Pharaoh appointed him vizier over Egypt. Jacob came to Egypt nine years later, after the seven years of plenty and two of famine (Gen. 45:11). At that time Jacob was 130 years old (Ibid., 47:9) and Joseph 39. Thus Jacob was 91 years older than Joseph (Cherez). I.E. notes that ben zekunim is to be taken literally, viz., son of old age, because the Midrash and Onkelos interpret it to mean a wise son. Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 84:8 and Rashi. Also, Benjamin, his brother, is referred to by Scripture as a child of his 8 That is, Jacob's. old age (Gen. 44:20). After Joseph and Benjamin no other children were born to Jacob. 9 Hence these two are referred to as children of his old age (Krinsky).
A COAT OF MANY COLORS. Ketonet passim means an embroidered coat. 10 Vat. Ebr. 38 reads: a coat made of embroidered parts. Some texts omit embroidered coat. According to I.E. passim means parts. The coat was made

up of embroidered parts (strips) each of which was of a different color (Filwarg). For an alternate interpretation see Cherez.
[MANY COLORS.] The word passim (many colors) is similar to the Aramaic word pas (part) in part of (pas) a hand (Dan. 5:5).

Verse 4

SPEAK UNTO HIM. Dabbero is to be rendered speak unto him. 11 Dabbero is the verb dabber (speak) plus the pronoun oto (him). However, they cannot be combined since one cannot say speak him. Hence I.E.'s comment that dabbero should be interpreted dabber lo (speak to him) (Filwarg). Cherez suggests that what I.E. means is that dabbero is not a combination of dabber oto but dabber immo (speak with him). See notes to Gen. 34:14.
[PEACEABLY.] Even peaceably. 12 They did not speak to him concerning things about which they agreed (Weiser) or they did not even say how are you, to him (Filwarg).

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

BINDING. Me'allemim (binding) comes from the same root as alummim (sheaves). The noun sheave is also found in the feminine, 13 Alummim (sheaves) is masculine. compare, bearing his sheaves (alummotav) (Ps. 126:6). 14 Alummotav (his sheaves) is feminine.
CAME ROUND ABOUT. Tesubbenah (came round about) comes from a root whose second and third letters are identical. 15 Its root is samekh, bet, bet. The bet receives a dagesh to compensate for a missing bet. 16 Tesubbenah is spelled with one bet. Thus a root letter is missing. The dagesh doubles the letter and thus compensates for the missing letter.

Verse 8

SHALT THOU INDEED REIGN OVER US? OR SHALT THOU INDEED HAVE DOMINION OVER US? Shall we set thee up as a king over us? 17 A king is chosen by the people. Hence I.E.'s comment (Krinsky). Or shalt thou rule over us by force. 18 A ruler is not chosen, he seizes power. Hence I.E.'s comment (Krinsky).

Verse 9

Verse 10

AND HIS FATHER REBUKED HIM. When the word ga'ar (rebuked) is followed by a bet it means to rebuke. 19 Our verse reads va-yigar bo aviv (and his father rebuked him). In our verse ga'ar thus precedes a bet and henceforth is to be translated as rebuked. When it is not followed by a bet it means to destroy. Compare, Behold, I will destroy (go'er) the seed for your hurt (Mal. 2:3). On the other hand, it is possible that the word go'er is used metaphorically in the aforementioned verse, its meaning being God will rebuke the seed and it will become frightened and not

arise out of the ground. 20 In other words the term ga'ar always means to rebuke.
I AND THY MOTHER. Thy mother refers to Bilhah his mother's handmaiden who raised him. 21 Rachel was dead by then.

Verse 11

KEPT THE SAYING. In his mind. This is also the correct meaning of kept in They kept His testimonies (Ps. 99:7). 22 The meaning of Ps. 22:7 is that they kept the testimonies in mind so that they would at the appropriate time teach them to the children of Israel.

Verse 12

Verse 13

HERE AM I. I will do as you say. 23 If Jacob called Joseph then the proper response would be here am I, as in Here am I, for thou didst call me (I Sam. 3:6). However, in our verse it comes as a response to Jacob's command. Hence I.E.'s point that in our verse it has the meaning of: I am at your service (Filwarg).

Verse 14

Verse 15

AND A CERTAIN MAN FOUND HIM. According to the plain meaning of the text a passer by found him. 24 According to the Midrash it was an angel. Some Midrashim identify the angel as Gabriel. Cf. Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer, Chap. 38; Targum Jonathan, and Rashi.

Verse 16

WHERE THEY ARE FEEDING THE FLOCK. If you know. 25 If you know either is implied or was actually said by Joseph and is left out of the text, our verse being abridged. The above has to be the case because otherwise why did Joseph asssume the man knew where his brothers were keeping the sheep?

Verse 17

TO DOTHAN. Dothan is spelled both with and without a yod in our verse. In either case it refers to one and the same place.

Verse 18

THEY CONSPIRED. Va-yitnakkelu (they conspired) means they had evil designs. Nokhel (dealeth craftily) in But cursed be he that dealeth craftily (nokhel) (Mal. 1:14) is similar.

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

LET US NOT TAKE HIS LIFE. Our verse is similar to 26 Our verse literally reads: lo nakkennu nefesh (let us not take his life) which literally means, let us not strike him life. I.E. holds that this is short for, let us not strike him (lo nakkennu) a mortal blow (makkat nefesh). but his minister Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man (Ex. 33:11), the meaning of which is: but his minister Joshua, the son of Nun, did the ministry 27 This has to be added to the text. of a young man. The aforementioned verse must be so understood because Joshua was not at that time a young man. 28 Thus a young man is short for: did the service of a young man. Similarly our verse should be read as if written: let us not strike him a mortal blow thus taking his life.

Verse 22

Verse 23

THAT THEY STRIPPED. Va-yafshitu (that they stripped) 29 Va-yafshitu is a hifil. Hifil is the causative form. Hence I.E. renders it: and they caused him to strip (Krinsky, Weiser and Cherez). For an alternate interpretation see Filwarg. is a causative. They told him to take the coat off by himself. 30 Hence they caused him to strip. Ketonet (coat) in Hebrew refers to a garment worn next to the skin. The brothers thus stripped Joseph of his garments and threw him naked into the pit. 31 According to Cherez, I.E. interprets the verse as follows: that they stripped Joseph of his coat (ketonet), i.e., of the garment worn next to the skin, and also of the coat of many colors. Joseph was thus left standing naked (Cherez). Cf. Rashi. However, Cherez's interpretation seems forced. It appears that I.E. identified the ketonet passim with the garment worn next to the skin.

Verse 24

Verse 25

AND THEY SAT DOWN TO EAT BREAD. The nine brothers. 32 Neither Reuben nor Benjamin was there.
A CARAVAN OF ISHMAELITES. Orechat is to be rendered caravan as Onkelos does. A caravan is so called because it travels on the roads (orechot).
SPICERY. Rabbi Moses Ha-Kohen the Spaniard 33 See notes to I.E.'s comments on Gen. 1:26. explains nekhot (spicery) to mean a precious thing. Bet nekhoto (his treasure house) in and showed them all his treasure-house (bet nekhoto) (II Kings 20:13) is similar. Nekhot 34 Spelled nun, caf, alef, tav. and nekhoto 35 Spelled nun, caf, vav, tav. The problem is that the word is not so spelled in II Kings 20:13. Krinsky and Cherez suggest that since the word is pronounced nekhoto, it is as if a vav is placed after the caf. are similar because the vav and the alef are interchangeable since they are quiescent letters. 36 The alef and vav in nekhot are not pronounced. Hence they are quiescent. I.E. refers to the alef, vav, heh, yod as quiescent letters (otiyot ha-nach) because they are not always enunciated.
AND BALM. The word for balm is encountered in Scripture vocalized with a quiescent sheva beneath the tzadi (utzri). 37 It is so found in our

verse but not so found elsewhere in Scripture. I.E.'s basic point is that balm is spelled with a sheva in our verse, tzeri. However, there is an important grammatical aside in this note. I.E. calls our sheva a quiescent sheva, a sheva nach. However, according to standard grammatical usage a sheva following a long vowel is vocal. Thus our sheva should be a vocal sheva, a sheva na, and not a quiescent one. Therefore our word should be read u-tzeri and not utzri. William Chomsky points out that the vocal pronunciation of the sheva following a long vowel was introduced by the Kimchis and that the pre-Kimchi grammarians had no such concept. I.E.'s note seems to bear this out. Cf. W. Chomsky, "The pronunciation of the Sheva," The Jewish Quarterly Review, Vol. LXII, October, 1971. For an alternate interpretation see Cherez. We also find it vocalized with a chataf kamatz beneath the tzadi, viz., Is there no balm (ha-tzori) in Gilead? (Jer. 8:22). It also appears with the tzadi vocalized with a cholem, viz., and honey, and oil, and balm (ve-tzori) (Ezek. 27:17). Saadiah Gaon explained that tzeri (balm) 38 He said that it is identical to an Arabic medicine called triak (Weiser). is a mixture of 75 roots. Others say that tzeri is a type of fruit. Still others say that it is either a fruit or the oil of a tree 39 Balsam (Weiser). that, according to Joseph ben Gurion, 40 Jossipon. A medieval work based on Josephus. was brought from Jericho to Egypt. However, Rabbi Ishmael 41 Cf. Kritot 6a; Shabbat 26a. However, in the Talmud this opinion is quoted in the name of Rabbi Simeon. Either there is a scribal error in our text or I.E. was quoting from memory. says that it means resin. We will rely on the latter opinion.
AND LADANUM. Saadiah Gaon says that lot (ladanum) is the same fruit that in Arabic is similarly called with the addition of a bet. 42 Belut (Weiser). Perhaps it is so.

Verse 26

WHAT PROFIT. Mah betza means what profit. Betza (profit) is close in meaning to chefetz (desire). What profit (betza) is there in my blood (Ps. 30:10) is similar. 43 Ps. 30:10 continues, Shall the dust praise Thee? Shall it declare Thy truth? Hence what desire (mah betza) is there in my death? Similarly the meaning of mah betza in our verse is: what desire is there in slaying our brother.

Verse 27

HE IS OUR BROTHER OUR FLESH. He is as our flesh 44 They obviously were not all one flesh. Hence what Judah meant was: he is as our flesh, even though he did not use the word as (Weiser). since we all came from one flesh. 45 We all come from the same parents who became one flesh, as in I.E.'s comment on Gen. 2:22 (Weiser). However, they did not all have the same mother. Therefore the interpretation must be as follows: we all came from the same father.

Verse 28

AND THERE PASSED BY. When the Ishmaelite merchantmen passed by them. 46 The vav of va-ya'avru (and there passed by) is to be rendered when rather than and. The meaning of the verse is: when the Midianite (Ishmaelite) merchantmen passed by, they drew and lifted Joseph out of the pit (Krinsky). I.E.'s point is that the Midianites in our verse refers to the caravan of Ishmaelites of verse 25. Thus va-ya'avru does not introduce new material. Hence I.E.'s paraphrase: when, etc. (Filwarg). Scripture refers to the Ishmaelites as Midianites because the Midianites are called Ishmaelites. The Book of Judges similarly says concerning the kings of Midian, because they were Ishmaelites (Jud. 8:24).

Verse 29

Verse 30

AND AS FOR ME, WHITHER SHALL I GO? Ani (I) is used twice in this clause 47 The Hebrew literally reads: And I, whither shall I go. even though one ani would have sufficed. 48 Scripture could have read: and whither shall I go. The latter is in keeping with Hebrew style.

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

WITHOUT DOUBT TORN IN PIECES. Toraf (torn) is a pu'al. The tet is vocalized with a cholam 49 Rather than a kubbutz as is the rule in the pu'al. Hence the reading toraf rather than turaf. because it precedes a resh which cannot receive a dagesh. 50 All middle root letters in the pu'al receive a dagesh. However, the resh cannot receive a dagesh ; thus the preceding vowel changes from a kubbutz to a cholam. Morak 51 It, too, is a pu'al, and because the middle letter is a resh the preceding letter is vocalized with a cholam. (scoured) in it shall be scoured (u-morek), and rinsed in water (Lev. 6:21) is similar.

Verse 34

Verse 35

AND HIS FATHER WEPT FOR HIM. Our sages interpreted this as referring to Isaac. 52 Bereshit Rabbah 84:19. According to the Midrash his father refers to Jacob's father. Isaac was overcome with grief over Jacob's trouble. The truth is that Isaac did not die until Joseph reached the age of twenty-nine. 53 Thus from this point of view the Midrashic interpretation is possible. I.E.'s accounting is as follows: Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born (Gen. 25:26). Jacob was 91 when Joseph was born (see note 7). Thus Isaac was 151 when Joseph was born. Isaac died at the age of 180 (Gen. 35:28), at which time Joseph was 29 years old as Isaac was 151 years older than Joseph. Joseph was 17 when he was sold. Thus Isaac lived 12 years past the year in which Joseph was sold (Weiser). Some say that the prophetic spirit was removed from both Jacob and Isaac because of their mourning. 54 The question arises, why didn't Jacob and Isaac, two prophets, know that Joseph was alive? They offer proof from Elisha. 55 That a prophet cannot prophesy when in a state of depression. Cf. II Kings 3:15. Before Elisha, who was then depressed (see Kimchi, ad hoc), prophesied he said, But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played that the hand of the Lord came upon him.
AND ALL HIS DAUGHTERS. His daughter and granddaughter. 56 Dinah his daughter and Sarah the daughter of Asher, as grandchildren are considered children. I.E. comments so because Jacob had only one daughter.

[TO THE GRAVE.] She'olah means down below, i.e., to the grave. Here the one who translated the Bible for those who err 57 Jerome who translated the Bible into Latin for the Christians. erred in translating she'olah as to hell. 58 Jerome renders she'ol as inferno. However, see Rashi who writes, "The Midrashic interpretation of she'ol is gehenna." Proof of his mistranslation is, For the nether-world (she'ol) cannot praise Thee…They that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth (Is. 38:18). 59 In this verse pit is parallel to she'ol. She'ol thus must mean pit. Also in Ps. 139:8, heaven is the antithesis of she'ol, 60 Thus she'ol is the opposite of heaven (sky); it refers to a place on the earth, i.e., the grave. viz., If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; If I make my bed in the nether-world (she'ol) behold Thou art there. Similarly Job states, The nether-world (she'ol) is naked before Him (Job 26:6). 61 The verse concludes, And destruction (the grave) hath no covering. Now she'ol is parallel to destruction (grave). Hence it, too, must mean grave. There are many other verses which prove that she'ol does not refer to hell.

Verse 36

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD. The term tabbach (guard) is used both with reference to killing 62 Cf. Dan. 2:14, The captain of the king's guard (rav tabbachyya) who was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon. and with reference to cooking. 63 Cf. I Sam. 9:24 where the term tabbach means cook, viz., And the cook (ha-tabbach) took up the thigh. Onkelos' rendition is correct. 64 Onkelos renders sar ha-tabbachim as the chief executioner.

Chapter 38

Verse 1

AND IT CAME TO PASS AT THAT TIME. This does not refer to the time that Joseph was sold. 1 As the sequence of chapters would tend to indicate. It refers to the events that happened prior to that time. From thence they journeyed unto Gudgod…At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister unto Him, and to bless in His name, unto this day (Deut. 10:7, 8) is similar. 2 The two events described in the latter verse did not take place at the same time even though Deut. 10:8 says, At that time. The tribe of Levi was chosen to minister unto the Lord in the second year while Israel journeyed to Gudgod in the fortieth year. 3 Following the Exodus. I will explain the latter verses in their proper place. Why, then, did Scripture insert this chapter (Chap. 38) at this point when logic dictates that And Joseph was brought down to Egypt (Gen. 39:1) should follow And the Midianites sold him (Joseph) into Egypt (Gen. 37:36)? 4 That is, Chap. 39 should follow Chap. 37. The Bible placed this chapter (38) here to contrast the behavior of Joseph vis-a-vis his master's wife with that of Judah toward his daughter-in-law. 5 Joseph controlled his passions. When Potiphar's wife said to him, Lie with me (Gen. 39:7) he refused. On the other hand when Judah saw the harlot in the entrance to Enaim he said to her, Come, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee (Gen. 38:16). What forced me to offer this interpretation is the fact that only twenty-two years passed between the sale of Joseph and the descent of our ancestors into Egypt. 6 Joseph was 17 when sold. He was 30 when appointed vizier over Egypt. Jacob came to Egypt after seven years of plenty and two of hunger passed. Thus a total of 22 years passed from the sale of Joseph to Jacob's descent into Egypt (Cherez). It is impossible for the events described in Chap. 38 to have occurred in such

a short time. Now we learn in this chapter of the birth of Onan, Judah's second son, 7 The point is that not only does Scripture tell of the birth of Er, the eldest son of Judah, it also tells of the birth of and marriage of his second son, Onan, as well. Er was at least close to a year older than Onan. Thus at least 13 years had to pass between the sale of Joseph and the marriage of Onan and Tamar. and his reaching the age of procreation, which at the very earliest starts at the age of 12. Scripture goes on to state, And in the process of time (v. 12). 8 The Hebrew literally reads, and the days became many. That is, following Onan's death Tamar, his widow, dwelt in her father's house for a long time. The chapter then tells us that Tamar conceived and gave birth to Perez. This same Perez came to Egypt with two sons of his own (Gen. 46:12). 9 We thus have to allow at least 13 years for the birth and marriage of Onan. We have to allow for the years that Tamar spent in her father's house. We have to allow 12 years for Perez's coming of age and two each for the birth of his sons. All of this could not have happened in 22 years, even assuming the above minimum figures. Do not be disturbed by the question of Bezalel, 10 According to the Talmud the early generations produced children at the age of eight. If this is the case then it is possible for all of the above to have taken place in 22 years: namely, Er was married in the ninth year after Joseph's sale. A year later Onan married. Tamar then stayed for many days in her father's house. We can interpret many days to mean a year. Eight years later Perez gave birth to a son and a year later to a second one. Thus it is possible for all that is reported in Chap. 38 to have taken place between the sale of Joseph and the descent into Egypt. The Talmud concludes from the account of Bezalel that the early generations had children at the age of eight We read in Sanhedrin 69b: "Whence do we know that the first generations produced children at eight years? This is to be inferred from the following: Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah (Ex. 35:30), and it is written:.. And Caleb (the son of Hezron) took unto him Ephrath, who bore him Hur. And Hur begot Uri, and Uri begot Bezalel (I Chron. 2:19, 20). When Bezalel was engaged in building the Tabernacle he was at least 13 years old as it is written, came every man from his work which they wrought (Ex. 36:4) and one is not called a man before the age of 13. And there is a Baraitha which states: The first year Moses prepared all that was necessary for the Tabernacle, and in the second year he erected it and sent the spies. And it is written: And Caleb the son of Jephunneh said…Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea (Josh. 14:6, 7) Now deduct 14, the age of Bezalel, from the age of Caleb when he was sent as a spy and there remains 26. Deduct two years for the three pregnancies with Uri and Hur and Bezalel, and there remains 24. Hence each of them produced children at the age of 8." It should be noted that the above is based on identifying Caleb ben Hezron (I Chron. 2:18-20) as Caleb ben Jephunneh (Josh. 14:6, 7). However, according to I.E. these two Calebs were not the same. Hence, the entire Talmudic passage quoted above is Aggadic and not in keeping with the plain meaning of the text. for I will explain it when I come to it.

Verse 2

A CERTAIN CANAANITE. Some say that kena'ani (Canaanite) means a merchant, 11 The commentators were bothered by Judah marrying a Canaanite woman. Hence their interpretation. as in As for the trafficker (kena'an), the balances of deceit are in his hand (Hos. 12:8) and in, and in that day there shall be no more a trafficker (kena'ani) in the house of the Lord of Hosts (Zech. 14:21), wherein the word trafficker is spelled with a yod as in our verse. However, it is possible that the word kena'ani is to be taken literally. 12 It means a Canaanite. Our sages said, that Judah went

down (v. 1) means that Judah was demoted from his leadership. 13 He thus went down from his exalted position. Cf. Soteh 13b. However, this is a Midrashic interpretation. The Bible says that Judah went down because whoever goes from north to south is going down. 14 North is above south. I.E. was of the opinion that Jacob and his family dwelt north of Adullam (Weiser). Those acquainted with science will understand that what I say is correct.

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

AT CHEZIB. Chezib is the name of a place.

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

AND PERFORM THE DUTY OF A HUSBAND'S BROTHER UNTO HER. This means, since you are her husband's brother, show yourself to be a husband's brother 15 The verse reads, ve-yabbem (and perform the duty of a husband's brother). A brother-in-law is called a yavam. Yabbem is its verbal form. It does not make sense to translate ve-yabbem, and be a husband's brother, when in fact he is a husband's brother. Thus ve-yabbem has to be rendered, show yourself to be a husband's brother (Filwarg). by going unto thy brother's wife. I will expound a little on levirate marriage when I come to the portion, If brethren dwell together (Deut. 25:5), if God prolongs my life till then.

Verse 9

THAT THE SEED WOULD NOT BE HIS. The seed would not be called by his name, 16 The child would be called the son of Er (Krinsky). as we find in And it shall be, that the first-born that she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother that is dead (Deut. 25:6).
THAT HE SPILLED IT ON THE GROUND. He destroyed 17 The Hebrew literally reads: ve-shichet (and he destroyed) artzah (to the ground). I.E. interprets this to mean he destroyed his semen by pouring it on the ground. the seed of his semen by pouring it outside of the vagina, on the ground. I am shocked by Ben Tamim Ha-Mizrachi 18 Adoniyahu ben Tamim Ha-Mizrachi, a grammarian and Bible commentator who lived in Iraq. He is also mentioned by I.E. in Eccles. 12:5. who interpreted ve-shichet artzah (that he spilled it on the ground) to mean that Onan had unnatural intercourse with Tamar so that she would not conceive. 19 He had anal intercourse with her. Onan thus shichet artzah (corrupted her ground), 20 Ben Tamim renders, ve-shichet artzah, he dealt corruptly with her ground. i.e., the place upon which she sits on the ground. 21 Ground is a euphemism for anus (Weiser). This interpretation is sheer madness. 22

Artzah means toward the ground. If there was a mappik in the heh it would mean her ground. But there is no such mappik in the heh (Krinsky). Heaven forbid that the holy seed become defiled with such filth.
GIVE SEED. Neton (give) is here conjugated according to the paradigm of a regular verb. 23 The root of neton is nun, tav, nun. In the infinitive the first and last nuns are usually dropped; i.e., the infinitive of this root is tet, as in Gen. 4:12. However, in neton the nuns are present. Hence in this case the root nun, tav, nun is conjugated as a shelamim, a regular verb.

Verse 10

Verse 11

REMAIN A WIDOW IN THY FATHER'S HOUSE. The prepositional bet has been omitted from before the bet of the word house. 24 Our verse literally reads: Remain a widow, your father's house. I.E. points out that the prepositional bet is omitted from before the word bet (house) and has to be supplied by the reader. Thus bet (house of) had to be read as if written be-vet (in the house of). We find the same type of omission in that was found in the house (bet) of the Lord (II Kings 18:15). 25 The verse literally reads: that was found house of the Lord. Here, too, the prepositional bet has to be supplied by the reader and the word to be read as if written be-vet.

Verse 12

AND JUDAH WAS COMFORTED. After Judah received condolences 26 I.E. apparently explains comforted in a technical rather than an emotional sense. Following his wife's burial Judah's friends expressed condolences and comforted him. Judah was thus comforted. for his wife's death he went up unto (al) his sheep shearers.
Al is to be understood as el (unto). 27 Al means on. Our verse literally reads: And went up on (al) his sheep-shearers, hence I.E.'s comment.

Verse 13

Verse 14

AND COVERED HERSELF. Ve-tekhas is a transitive verb. It means and covered herself. 28 An intransitive verb is not followed by the object. In our verse va-tekhas (covered) is not followed by the object. I.E. points out that even though va-tekhas is not followed by the object it is transitive and the object has to be supplied by the reader, i.e., translate va-tekhas, and she covered herself.
AND WRAPPED HERSELF. The meaning of va-titallaf (she wrapped herself) is she hid her face. Va-yitallaf (Jonah 4:8) is similar. Its meaning is, Jonah hid his face in his garments. Similar in meaning both to our verse and Jon. (4:8) is the word me'ullefet (overlaid) in Overlaid (me'ullefet) with sapphires (Cant. 5:14).
IN THE ENTRANCE OF ENAIM. Enaim is the name of a place. Others say that there were two springs with a door-like entrance on the road which Judah had to pass on his return to his home. 29 According to this interpretation enaim is the plural of ayin (a spring) and petach enayim should thus be rendered: at the entrance of the wells.

Verse 15

FOR SHE HAD COVERED HER FACE. This explains the meaning of va-titallaf (and wrapped herself) (v. 14). 30 We can ascertain that the meaning of va-titallaf means to cover the face from our clause, as it is the manner of Scripture to explain later a previously used term (Weiser). Someone who explains for she had covered her face to mean that she covered her face with a variety of colored cosmetics and brought proof of this from his daughter 31 She wore cosmetics (Filwarg). His daughter put so much cosmetics on her face that she was unrecognizable. Tamar acted similarly. is speaking nonsense, for one ought not to offer proof from fools. 32 If she put on so much make up that she was unrecognizable then she was a fool and one is not to bring proof from her. That which our sages say concerning Tamar's chastity in her father-in-law's house is also correct. 33 Cf. Sotah 10b: "She covered herself in her father-in-law's house." Judah thus had never seen her face and therefore could not now recognize her (Nahmanides).

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

THY SIGNET. Because of Judah's great lust he gave three objects as a pledge for something insignificant. I will explain the meaning of kedeshah (harlot) (v. 21) in my comments on There shall be no harlot (kedeshah) of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a sodomite (kadesh) of the sons of Israel (Deut. 23:18).

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

LET HER TAKE IT. Forget about her and let her keep the pledge.
LEST WE BE PUT TO SHAME. Lest I be a laughing stock, for giving a signet, cord and staff for something so insignificant.
[BEHOLD, I SENT THIS KID, AND THOU HAST NOT FOUND HER.] This is a sign that she wants to keep the pledge. 34 Her not making herself available for payment is a sign that she intends to keep the pledge.

Verse 24

ABOUT THREE MONTHS LATER. When one speaks of three months a mem is prefixed to the word three. 35 Hence the term mishlosh (three months) in our verse. When one speaks of three days a mem is suffixed to the word three. 36 Hence the term shilshom (three days ago) (Cherez). The Hebrew word for three is shalosh.

Verse 25

WHEN SHE WAS BROUGHT FORTH. If the alef of mutzet was not quiescent as is the grammatical rule, the word would have followed the paradigm of muda'at (made known) in This is made known (muda'at) (Is. 12:5). 37 If a chet or ayin would have been used then our word would be so vocalized since it is a hofal participle. The alef is vocalized with a tzere because it is a quiescent letter (Cherez).

Verse 26

FORASMUCH AS I GAVE HER NOT. The expression ki al ken (for as much) has the same meaning as the Rabbinic term ho'il (since), as in forasmuch (ki al ken) as I have seen thy face (Gen. 33:10). The meaning of our clause is: since I gave her not to Shelah my son. Or its meaning is, she did this because I gave her not to Shelah my son. 38 In other words, the words she did this because are missing from the text. The verse should be read as if written ki al ken asetah zot ki, for therefore she did this thing because, etc. According to this interpretation, ki al ken has the meaning for therefore i.e., it is an idiom pleonastically emphasizing the ground for an action.
AND HE KNEW HER AGAIN NO MORE. He did not sleep with her again.

Verse 27

Verse 28

THAT ONE PUT OUT A HAND. One of them put out a hand. The latter is not identified by name because he was not yet named. This birth, too, 39 As the birth of Jacob and Esau were. was out of the ordinary in that both placentas opened simultaneously and when this one drew back his hand, his brother came out.

Verse 29

WHEREFORE HAST THOU MADE A BREACH. Mah paratzta, alekhah paretz means, wherefore hast thou acted like a man who breaches a fence and goes through it. You are now responsible for the breach. 40 "You are responsible for the breach" means that should any harm befall your twin because of your audacity you will bear responsibility (Krinsky). Others say that paratzta is the same as u-faratzta (and thou shalt spread abroad) (Gen. 28:14). 41 The meaning of mah paratzta, alekhah paretz (wherefore hast thou made a breach for thyself) being, wherefore hast thou spread abroad, indeed thou wilt spread abroad (Filwarg). Saadiah Gaon explains that paratzta is to be interpreted literally as meaning to make a breach but that paretz in alekhah paretz has the same meaning as va-yifrotz (it hath increased) in and hath increased (va-yifrotz) abundantly (Gen. 30:30). 42 According to Saadiah, the meaning of mah paratzta, alekhah paretz is, wherefore has thou made a breach, indeed thou wilt increase (Filwarg).

Chapter 39

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

HE KNEW NOT AUGHT SAVE THE BREAD WHICH HE DID EAT. Some say that the bread which he did eat is a euphemism for a conjugal relationship. 1 Cf. Rashi. However, this interpretation is far-fetched. Furthermore, Potiphar was a eunuch. 2 Cf. verse 1, Potiphar seris paroh. I.E. interprets seris paroh (an officer of Pharaoh) as Pharaoh's eunuch. If he was a eunuch then the bread which he did eat obviously cannot refer to sexual intercourse. I believe that what this verse says is that Potiphar put Joseph in charge of everything that he had except for his bread, which Joseph was not permitted even to touch because he was a Hebrew, as we see from the verse because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians (Gen. 43:32). Potiphar knew that Joseph was a Hebrew. Potiphar's wife similarly said, See, he hath brought in a Hebrew unto us to mock us (v. 14). 3 Which proves that his master knew that Joseph was a Hebrew.
AND JOSEPH WAS OF BEAUTIFUL FORM. Like his mother.

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

[TO LIE BY HER.] To just lie next to her, 4 That is, just to lie next to her, "to lie next to her while both are fully clothed" (Nahmanides). or to be with her, to converse with her.

Verse 11

AND IT CAME TO PASS ON A CERTAIN DAY. On the same day that she had first asked him to lay with her. 5 The Hebrew literally reads: And a day like this came to pass, i.e., a day like the one described above, that is, the day that she said, “lie with me.” It was on this same day a week later, or a month later or a full year later. The latter appears correct to me. TO DO HIS WORK. To supervise the housework or to oversee his master’s wealth, for Joseph was in charge of everything. The Midrash pertaining to and there was none of the men 6 The Hebrew literally reads: and there was no man. According to Tanchuma, Va-yeshev, 9, Joseph wanted to have intercourse with Potiphar’s wife but found himself impotent (Weiser and Krinsky according to one interpretation). Or the reference may be to Soteh 36b, that he wanted to have intercourse with Potiphar’s wife but his father’s image appeared before him and as a result Joseph refrained from sinning. Thus and there was none of the men of the house there within but his father’s image was there. is an individual opinion. 7 Hence it is not binding.

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

HE HATH BROUGHT UNTO US. That is, my husband. 8 Our verse is short for: my husband hath brought unto us (Weiser).

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

THAT HIS WRATH WAS KINDLED. Potiphar nevertheless did not kill Joseph because he wasn’t certain as to the truth of his wife’s accusation.

Verse 20

Verse 21

PRISON. We can not ascertain whether bet ha-sohar (the prison) is a Hebrew or Egyptian word in view of the fact that the Bible goes on to explain its meaning 9 Were it a Hebrew word there would be no reason to explain the place where the King's prisoners were bound. as it does with the Persian word ha-achashteranim (that were used in the King's service) which is followed by the Hebrew bene ha-rammakhim (bred of the stud) 10 According to I.E. bene ha-rammakhim is Hebrew for achashteranim. (Est. 8:10).

Verse 22

AND WHATSOEVER THEY DID THERE, HE WAS THE DOER OF IT. Some interpret this to mean that Joseph, like all the other prisoners, was engaged in work to support himself. 11 That is, whatever they did he did. However, I believe that the meaning of our verse is: and whatsoever they had to do there he was, as it were, the doer of it, because he was their supervisor. The next verse bears out the latter interpretation. 12 Verse 23 relates that the keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand, which implies that Joseph did not actually do any work, but supervised the others.

Chapter 40

Verse 1

OFFENDED. They committed an offense (chet) in a matter of state. 1 According to Cherez. Weiser suggests rendering: They committed an offense punishable by the state.

Verse 2

The fact that the samekh of sarisav (his officers) retains its kamatz is proof that the resh of saris (officer) should have received a dagesh, and since it cannot the samekh was vocalized with a long kamatz to compensate for the missing dagesh. 2 Words vocalized with a kamatz beneath their first letter in the singular are vocalized with a sheva under their first letter in the plural; i.e., nagid becomes negidim. Saris does not follow this rule. Its plural is sarisim, not serisim. Hence the word presents a problem. I.E. suggests that saris belongs to the group of nouns vocalized pattach-chirik. The latter retain their pattach in the plural; i.e., kabbir becomes kabbirim. I.E. points out that saris should have been vocalized with a pattach beneath the samekh but due to the fact that a resh cannot receive a dagesh (a dagesh usually follows a pattach), the samekh was vocalized with a kamatz to compensate for the missing dagesh. Hence saris retains its kamatz in the plural.

Verse 3

AND HE PUT THEM IN WARD IN THE HOUSE OF THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD. A place where they would be guarded so they would not escape.

Verse 4

AND THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD CHARGED. When these two officers were put in a ward in the house of the captain of the guard, the latter remembered (pakad) 3 In this interpretation va-yifkod (charged) is translated as remembered. Thus according to this interpretation, And the captain of the guard charged (va-yifkod) Joseph is to be rendered: And the captain of

the guard remembered (va-yifkod) Joseph. Joseph; i.e., he recalled his abilities 4 He remembered that Joseph was able to relate to nobles (Weiser). Filwarg interprets: remembered the Jospeh episode, i.e., that Joseph, like the butler and the baker, offended his master. Krinsky explains: he remembered Joseph's words protesting his innocence and decided to place him in a prison whose conditions were better. The Hebrew reading of I.E. is zakhar devarav. and brought him to his house 5 According to this interpretation Joseph was originally in a different prison and was now brought to the one in the home of the captain of the guard. and placed him in a dungeon 6 Cf. verse 15. which is the ward spoken of in our verse. The latter is the opinion of the great grammarian. 7 Jonah Ibn Janah. However, I believe that the prison was in the house of the captain of the guard and Joseph was there to begin with. Proof of this is Scripture's explicit statement, And he put them…into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. What our verse relates is that the captain of the guard commanded (charged) 8 I.E. so translates va-yifkod as charged. Joseph to be with the butler and baker and serve them because they had high status in Pharaoh's palace insomuch as they were officers of the king.

Verse 5

AND THEY DREAMED. The meaning 9 Reading ta'am rather than ke-ta'am (Filwarg, Krinsky). The aforementioned is borne out by Vat. Ebr. 38 which reads, ve-ta'am. of each man according to the interpretation of his dream is that each one of them saw in his dream details that could be interpreted to foretell what would happen in the future. 10 There was no part of the dream that did not allude to something. There was no nonsensical part in the dream. Every part of the dream had a meaning and was interpretable (Filwarg based on the reading of I.E. quoted by Nahmanides which is borne out by Vat. Ebr. 38). Our printed texts read, "Each one saw the interpretation of the dream and what happened to him" The problem with this reading is, if they saw the interpretation of their dream in their nocturnal vision why, then, did they turn to Joseph for its interpretation? Hence we have translated according to Vat. Ebr. 38.

Verse 6

SAD. Zo'afim (sad) means agitated, as is the meaning of the word zapo (its rage) in and the sea ceased from its raging (mi-zapo) (Jon. 1:15). 11 Both words come from the same root.
AND JOSEPH CAME IN UNTO THEM. It is possible that Joseph used to sleep in the dungeon at night. 12 The prison had a number of levels. Joseph's quarters were in the lowest. He spent his nights in the dungeon and his days with the other prisoners (Krinsky).

Verse 7

Verse 8

[DO NOT INTERPRETATIONS BELONG TO GOD.] Its meaning is that the interpretations of dreams belong to the Lord because He knows the future. He has revealed what is going to come to pass in a dream to one whom He selected and it therefore makes no difference whether I interpret the dream for good or ill. Since this is so, and all interpretations belong to God, do not be concerned about telling me your dreams. 13 The point is, only God knows the future and what He knows will come to pass. Hence my interpretation can in no way influence the outcome of your dream. What

will be, will be. The Rabbinic statement that all dreams follow the interpretation is the opinion of an individual sage. 14 Rabbi Elazar in Berakhot 55b. According to the latter a dream's meaning depends on its interpretation. This contradicts I.E. Hence, I.E. says that Rabbi Elazar's opinion is not binding.

Verse 9

Verse 10

ITS BLOSSOMS SHOT FORTH. Nitzah (its blossoms) is the same as henetzu (be in flower) in And the pomegranates be in flower (hanetzu) (Cant. 7:13). AND THE CLUSTERS THEREOF BROUGHT FORTH RIPE GRAPES. Hivshilu (brought forth ripe) is the oppposite of boser (sour grapes). 15 I.E. could not find a synonym for ripe. The only way he could define it was by contrasting it with its opposite. Bashal (is ripe) in For the harvest is ripe (bashal) (Joel 4:13) is similar. The two words are similar even though hivshilu in our verse and bashal belong to different conjugational paradigms. 16 Hivshilu is in the hifil, bashal is in the kal. Both mean ripened.

Verse 11

AND PRESSED THEM. Va-eschat (pressed) is similar to shochate (slay) in That slay (shochate) the children in the valleys (Is. 57:5). Saadiah Gaon's interpretation of va-eschat is wrong. 17 This is a very difficult comment to unravel. The most acceptable interpretation is offered by Filwarg. According to Filwarg, I.E. maintains that va-eschat does not mean to press or squeeze as Saadiah Gaon says (this interpretation is accepted by J.P.S. and all others) since the word is not found elsewhere in the Bible. The word sachat, meaning to squeeze, is found in Rabbinic literature, but there it is spelled with a samakh and not with a sin. I.E. notes that the word shachat spelled with a shin or sachat spelled with a sin as in our verse means the same, to cut, hence to slay by cutting the throat. Thus our verse should be rendered: And I cut the grape so that its juice ran. It is also possible that in I.E.'s copy of Isaiah shochate was spelled with a sin, i.e., he read sochate, and what I.E. is doing is noting that va-eschat is like sochate. For additional interpretations see Cherez and Weiser.

Verse 12

THE INTERPRETATION OF IT. Pitrono (the interpretation of it) means its explanation. The term pitrono is not found in Scripture except in reference to a dream. 18 Hence it means the interpretation of a dream. It cannot he used in any other context (Cherez).
Some ask, how did Joseph know that the three branches refer to three days and not to three months or three years? Because yom hulledet et paroh (v. 20) 19 Translated according to Filwarg, Weiser and Cherez. According to Krinsky the question raised in I.E. is not answered. The way Krinsky read I.E. is: I.E. asks, "How did Joseph know that the three branches refer to three days?" He then goes on to explain the meaning of the clause yom hulledet et paroh. possibly means the day on which Pharaoh was born. 20 Joseph knew that Pharaoh's birthday would be in three days and it was obvious to him that the branches referred to this festive event (Filwarg, Weiser, Cherez). For today there are kings who make a party on their birthday and invite their servants and distribute gifts to them. It is also possible that the queen was pregnant. 21 And that yom hulledet et

paroh means the day that a child was born to Pharaoh. It was known that the queen was in her ninth month and Joseph reasoned that the "three branches" referred to the days left till she delivered. The first interpretation appeals to me.

Verse 13

SHALL PHARAOH LIFT UP THY HEAD. Yissa means shall lift up. 22 Pharaoh will raise the chief butler from his fallen state. In its correct sense, yissa means to lift up by counting. 23 See note 25. Proof of this is Scripture stating, and he lifted up (va-yissa) the head of the chief butler and the head of the chief baker among his servants (v. 20). 24 Here the term va-yissa must mean and he counted because Pharaoh did not exalt the chief baker. I will explain this term in my comments on the Torah portion Ki Tissa (Ex. 30:12). 25 In his short commentary on Ex. 30:12, I.E. points out that one who counts people lists them in a row and places the most important at the top. Thus when Pharaoh will count his servants he will have a list of his butlers and bakers made. The name of the chief butler will head the list of butlers and that of the baker the list of bakers. Thus to "lift up" means to count. However, it does so only in a specific sense. It is not a mere synonym for counting. It should be noted that some commmentaries maintain that I.E. is of the opinion that to lift up is another way of saying to count. Cf. Krinsky and Cherez.
THINE OFFICE. Kannekha means thy previous station, thy place, 26 Hebrew mekhunatekha. Compare, mekhunatah in Zech. 5:11. thy state. 27 Hebrew matkuntekha. Compare, matkunto in II Chron. 24:13. I.E. is saying is that kannekha (thine office) is similar to mekhunatah and matkunto. However, I.E. changes the pronominal suffixes. Kannekha most likely comes from the same root as ken (a base, a pedestal) (I Kings 7:29). The word kanno (in his place) in Then shall stand up in his place (kanno) (Dan. 11:20) is analogous.

Verse 14

Verse 15

OUT OF THE LAND OF THE HEBREWS. I will explain this in my comments on If thou buy a Hebrew servant (Ex. 21:2). When the term hinneh (behold) is found in Scripture following a dream, its meaning is as it were. 28 Hinneh (behold) applies to something real. However, when used to describe what one saw in a dream it means: as it were, as if. Cf. Gen. 28:12; 37:7-10; 41:2-6, 18-23.

Verse 16

THREE BASKETS OF WHITE BREAD. Saadiah Gaon says that chori means white bread, as in the nobles (chore) 29 Cf. I.E.'s comment on Gen. 36:20 where he writes, "Nobles are called chorim (literally, the white ones) because they are metaphorically speaking as the color white which resembles light." of Judah (Neh. 6:17).

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

WITHIN YET. Be'od (within yet) is to be translated before again. 30 Od means again. The bet prefixed to it means before. Thus be'od means before again (within yet), and the meaning of be'od sheloshet yamim (within yet three days) is before three days again pass. I.E. makes this point because Onkelos translates be'od, after yet. Thus Onkelos renders be'od sheloshet yamim at the end of three days. Its meaning is: such a time 31 Three days. will not again pass without this happening.
SHALL PHARAOH LIFT UP THY HEAD FROM OFF THEE. He will lift it up from its place. It means he will remove it or raise it up on a pole. 32 The point is that the Hebrew word yissa may mean to remove or to raise up (Cherez).

Verse 20

BIRTHDAY. Hulledet (birth) is an infinitive in the hofal.

Verse 21

UNTO HIS BUTLERSHIP. Mashkehu (his butlership) here is a noun. 33 Here mashkehu means his drink. The meaning of our verse is: And he restored the chief butler back to being in charge of his drink. In verse 13 it means, gives him to drink. However, mashkehu in when thou wast his butler (mashkehu) (v. 13) is a verb.

Verse 22

Verse 23

YET DID NOT THE CHIEF BUTLER REMEMBER JOSEPH. He did not verbally mention him to Pharaoh. 34 According to I.E. zakhar (usually translated remembered) here means mentioned, as in make mention of me (ve-hizkartani) unto Pharaoh (v. 14). The words tizkeru (shall ye mention) and zakhar (he remembered), in And the burden of the Lord shall ye mention (tizkeru) 35 Literally, shall ye remember. no more (Jer. 23:36) and he remembered (zakhar) Vashti (Est. 2:1), are similar.
BUT FORGOT HIM. In his heart. 36 Thus the verse tells us that the butler not only failed to mention Joseph to Pharaoh, he totally forgot about him.

Chapter 41

Verse 1

AND IT CAME TO PASS AT THE END OF TWO FULL YEARS. Scripture does not indicate the point from which these two years are reckoned. And it came to pass at the end of forty years (II Sam. 15:7), And within threescore and five years (Is. 7:8), and Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year (Ezek. 1:1) 1 In all these verses Scripture doesn't indicate the point from which the reckoning starts. are similar. However, it is possible that Scripture's point of reckoning is the chief butler's release from prison or the day that Joseph was put into prison.
[FULL.] I have already explained the meaning of yamim (full). 2 Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 4:4.

THAT PHARAOH DREAMED. That is, was dreaming. Compare, And Rebekah heard (Gen. 27:5). 3 The Hebrew literally reads: that Pharaoh dreams (u-faroh cholem), hence I.E.'s comment. See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 27:5 and the notes thereto.

Verse 2

IN THE REED-GRASS. Some say that achu (reed-grass) means a valley with plants. 4 Hence our phrase is to be rendered: they fed in the growth covered valley. Others say that achu is the name of a certain type of plant and 5 So Vat. Ebr. 38. the bet of ba-achu is superfluous. 6 If we interpret achu as valley then the bet of ba-achu serves a purpose; it stands for "in the." Thus ba-achu means in the growth covered valley. However, if achu is the name of a plant then the bet is superfluous, for one cannot say they fed in the plant (whatever plant achu might be). According to the latter interpretation our verse is to be translated: and they fed upon achu. It is similar to the bet of va-merorim in, He hath filled me with bitterness (va-merorim) (Lam. 3:15). 7 Hebrew usage requires the verse to read merorim rather than va-merorim. According to both of these interpretations achu here and achim in For though he be fruitful among the reed-plants (achim) (Hos. 13:15) are related and come from one root. 8 I.E. literally reads, "It (achim in Hosea) is its brother (achiv) the son of his mother." I.E. plays with achim (valley or plant) and ach (brother). His point is that both come from the same root, that our word is in the singular, and that in Hosea it is in the plural (Cherez).

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

EARS OF CORN. Shibbolim (ears of corn) is a feminine plural even though it ends in a mem. 9 Which ordinarily indicates that a word is a masculine plural. It is similar to nashim (women) and pilagshim (concubines). 10 Both of which are feminine plural nouns with masculine endings.

Verse 6

AND BLASTED. U-shedufot kadim means they were blasted by a wind coming from the east for kadim means east. East is so termed because the sun rises there first. 11 Kedem means first. Cf. Is. 23:7; Ezek. 38:17. I.E. makes this point because kedem can also mean front. However, a circular object (the earth) has no front (Krinsky). Shedufot kadim can be rendered as blasted by the east. Hence I.E. points out that east refers to an east wind.

Verse 7

Ha-mele'ot (full) has the same meaning as ha-beri'ot (rank). 12 Verse 5 reads beri'ot ve-tovot (rank and good). Similarly verse 7 reads, ha-beri'ot ve-ha-mele'ot (rank and full). I.E. points out that beri'ot when referring to ears of corn means full because the term bari (rank), which means fat, can only be used when referring to animals; i.e., one cannot speak of a fat plant. Hence I.E. points out that here bari means full

(Filwarg). Thus beri'ot ve-tovot means the same as mele'ot ve-tovot. On the other hand I.E.'s comment may pertain only to verse 7. In this case I.E. is pointing out that the Bible there uses two synonyms, mele'ot and beri'ot, for full (Weiser).

Verse 8

THAT HIS SPIRIT WAS TROUBLED. Va-tippa'em (was troubled) is a nifal. It is similar to nifamti 13 Which is a nifal. The nun of the nifal is missing in va-tippa'em because it is an imperfect with a conversive vav, and the nun of the nifal is dropped in the future and is compensated by a dagesh in the first letter of the root. in I am troubled (nifamti) and cannot speak (Ps. 77:5). Others say 14 The "others" do not dispute what has been said until now. They explain the meaning of the word, whereas the first interpretation gave the conjugation of the word (Cherez). that both va-tippa'em and nifamti come from the same root as pa'am (anvil) 15 The meaning of va-tippa'em rucho (that his spirit was troubled) thus is: that his spirit was beaten. in that smiteth the anvil (pa'am) (Is. 41:7). Its meaning is that his spirit was like a beaten body. 16 It was pained and troubled. Spirit is immaterial and cannot be beaten. However, it may be compared to a beaten body. His spirit was beaten as if it were a body (Weiser). Hence the verb va-tippa'em (was beaten) can govern rucho (his spirit).
MAGICIANS OF. Chartume (magicians of) comes from a quadriliteral root. 17 Its root being chet, resh, tet, mem. However, it is possibly an Aramaic or Egyptian word. It means a scientist. 18 Weiser.
AND ALL THE WISE MEN THEREOF. Men learned in astrology and dream interpretation.

Verse 9

MY FAULTS. Even though I will recall my faults. 19 It is not fitting to recall one's offenses before the king. Nevertheless, in this case I must (Krinsky). I will tell you of an interpreter, even though I have to recall my faults (Cohen).

Verse 10

PHARAOH WAS WROTH WITH HIS SERVANTS. I believe that Pharaoh is an adjective 20 What I.E. means by "adjective" is an adjectival noun, a descriptive term like melekh (king). Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 1:1 and the notes thereto. and not a proper name. It is an Egyptian word. It is a title as Hiram in Tyre. 21 According to I.E., Hiram is not a proper noun. It is a term like Pharaoh or melekh. We thus find a Hiram in the days of David (II Sam. 5:11) and in the days of Solomon (I Kings 5:15) (Krinsky). Similarly in our day all great Arab kings are called "prince of the believers." Hence we find a Pharaoh in the days of Abraham and a Pharaoh in the days of Joseph. 22 They obviously were not the same person. We also read that a Pharaoh died and a new Pharaoh arose. 23 Ex. 1:8. Similarly we find a Pharaoh in the days of Jeremiah. 24 Jer. 44:30. Do you not see that Scripture itself explains that Pharaoh is a term for the king of Egypt, 25 The Bible in a number of places explains that Pharaoh is a king of Egypt. Cf. Ex. 6:13, 29; Jer. 44:30. Filwarg questions this reading and suggests emending it. According to Filwarg we should translate, "Do you not see that Scripture does not explain the term Pharaoh. It does not do so because Pharaoh is a title for the kings of Egypt." According to Filwarg, I.E.'s point is that the Bible usually does not identify the Pharaoh because it is known to be a title for the king of Egypt. If Pharaoh was a proper name, king of Egypt would follow it. as evidenced by the terms Pharaoh Hophra and Pharaoh Neco, 26 Jer. 44:30;

46:2. wherein Hophra and Neco are proper nouns. 27 Therefore Pharaoh must be an adjective. Do not raise any objection from the Midrash concerning Solomon's throne, 28 According to the Midrash, Va-yikra Rabbah 20, Pharaoh Neco means Pharaoh the lame. Thus Neco is an adjective. According to the Midrash this Pharaoh tried to sit on Solomon's throne, which had been brought to Egypt by an earlier Pharaoh named Shishak, and had his leg bitten and broken by a lion, hence the name Pharaoh Neco, Pharaoh the lame. for the king of Egypt did not take it to Egypt. 29 King Solomon's throne was never brought to Egypt as it is not included among the spoil taken by Shishak. Cf. I Kings 14:25, 26. Additional proof 30 That Pharaoh is not a proper noun. is found in the statement of the chief butler, Pharaoh was wroth, and in Joseph's statements, God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace (v. 16); He hath shown unto Pharaoh (v. 28); and Let Pharaoh do this (v. 34). 31 Thus these verses prove that Pharaoh is not a proper noun. It is not in keeping with proper etiquette to mention the king by name.
ME AND THE CHIEF BAKER. The word me is mentioned twice in this verse in keeping with Hebrew usage. Compare, and as for me, whither shall I go (Gen. 37:30). 32 See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 37:30 and the notes thereto. Our verse reads, and put me…me and the chief baker.

Verse 11

EACH MAN ACCORDING TO THE INTERPRETATION OF HIS DREAM. I have previously explained this. 33 I.E. explains the meaning of each man according to the interpretation of his dreams in his comments on Gen. 40:5.

Verse 12

Verse 13

I WAS RESTORED. By Pharaoh. 34 The verse literally reads: me he restored (oti heshiv), him he hanged (oto talah). The question is, to whom does "he" refer. According to the first interpretation it refers to Pharaoh, according to the second, to Joseph. Or its meaning is, Joseph's word 35 Since Joseph said it, it was as if he had done it (Filwarg). Or Joseph's saying it was the cause of it (Krinsky). or Joseph's interpretation restored me and hanged him. 36 Joseph, by so interpreting, caused it to happen (Krinsky).

Verse 14

AND THEY BROUGHT HIM HASTILY. Pharaoh's messengers.
AND HE SHAVED HIMSELF. Someone shaved him. 37 Our verse reads, va-yegakkach. If Joseph shaved himself Scripture would have used the hitpa'el va-yitgallach rather than the pi'el va-yegallach (Cherez), the meaning of which is, and he shaved. However, va-yegallach presents a problem. The subject is missing. Hence I.E. notes that it should be rendered: and someone shaved him. According to Krinsky, I.E. is of the opinion (for the aforementioned reasons) that our verse is abridged and the reader has to supply the subject. Our verse should thus be rendered: and the shaver shaved him. I.E.'s note consists of one word, ha-megalle'ach (the shaver).

Verse 15

Verse 16

IT IS NOT IN ME. Biladai (it is not in me) is a compound of two words. 38 It is a compound of bal (not) and ade (unto). It is not in me refers to And I have heard say of thee that when thou hearest a dream thou canst interpret it (v. 15). When Joseph heard Pharaoh say this he replied, it is not in me, but God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace via my interpretation. 39 The problem is what does biladai (it is not in me) refer to. According to this explanation biladai refers to the power to interpret dreams. The power to interpret dreams is not in me, it comes from God (Cherez). Others say that when Joseph heard Pharaoh say, thou canst interpret dreams, Jospeh replied, I am not (it is not in me) the interpreter; God is, and He will give the king an answer of peace. 40 According to this interpretation biladai means not I, and refers to the interpreter (Cherez). It should be noted that I.E. is vague and that Krinsky, Kaputa and others interpret differently.
[WILL GIVE AN ANSWER.] The meaning of ya'aneh (will give an answer) is, He will always provide. Compare, ma'aneh in for God answereth him (ma'aneh) in the joy of his heart (Eccles. 5:19), and ta'aneh in And the earth shall respond (ta'aneh) (Hos. 2:24). Nevertheless, the word is close to its primary meaning. 41 Its primary meaning is to answer. When one provides, he, as it were, answers (Cherez). For an alternate translation see Weiser.

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

[POOR AND VERY ILL-FAVORED.] In relating the dream Pharaoh added the word dallot (poor), and in place of mareh (favored) he used the term to'ar (favored) because their meanings are similar. 42 In verse 3 we read that Pharaoh saw ill-favored (ra'ot mareh) and lean fleshed kine in his dream. In our verse Pharaoh describes them as poor and very ill-favored (ve-ra'ot to'ar me'od) and lean fleshed. I.E. says there is no discrepancy in the descriptions because adding a word or using a synonym does not change the meaning. He further expands on this point in his comments on Ex. 20:1 where he uses this argument to explain why there are two different versions of the Ten Commandments in the Pentateuch.

Verse 20

Verse 21

BUT THEY WERE STILL ILL-FAVORED. Each one of the kine was ill-favored. 43 Marehen (favored) is a plural; ra (ill) is a singular. Thus marehen ra is a combination of singular and plural. I.E. explains this by noting that it means each one of the kine was ill-favored. This is how the medieval grammarians explained this type of combination (Weiser). Here Pharaoh expanded in his description of his dream and added that after the ill-favored kine had eaten the fat kine, they were still ill-favored as at the beginning. 44 When the dream was first described in verse 4, it was not indicated that after swallowing the seven fat kine, the seven lean

ones were still ill-favored as at the beginning. Here, unlike verse 19, the addition is significant. The entire verse consists of Pharaoh's elaboration of his dream.

Verse 22

Verse 23

WITHERED. The word tzenumot (withered) is not found elsewhere in Scripture. Its meaning is the same as that of rekot (empty). 45 Joseph in verse 27 refers to the ears as rekot (empty). In our verse they are described as tzenumot. According to I.E., Joseph substituted a synonym. I.E. explains these substitutions in his comments on verse 19. Others say that tzenumot means images, 46 In a manner of speaking images are imitations. Similarly applying this concept these things were in the shape of ears but empty on the inside (Krinsky). Or images have no practical use, neither did these ears (Cherez). Weiser suggests that what I.E. says is that images are hard; these, too, were hard and could not serve as food. According to the latter interpretation I.E. agrees with Rashi who interprets tzenumot as hard. for that is its meaning in Arabic.

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

GREAT PLENTY. Sava (plenty) is a noun. It is like ra'av (famine). 47 Both sava and ra'av are nouns. Hence the one who says in his Sabbath prayers 48 In the nishmat prayer. u-ve-sova kilkaltanu errs because sova spelled with a vav is an infinitive. 49 The prayer reads, during famine (ra'av) thou didst feed us, and didst sustain us in plenty (p. 419, The Authorized Prayer Book, trans. by J. H. Hertz). Plenty is parallel to famine. As ra'av is a noun so its parallel must be a noun. Hence the correct reading is sava and not sova. The correct way to read this prayer is without a vav, viz., u-ve-sava (and in plenty) kilkaltanu (thou sustained us).

Verse 30

Verse 31

[AND THE PLENTY SHALL NOT BE KNOWN IN THE LAND.] Joseph based this on but they were still ill-favored as at the beginning (v. 21).

Verse 32

AND FOR THAT THE DREAM WAS DOUBLED. Hishanot (was doubled) is a nifal. It comes from the same root as shenayim (two). Its meaning is the dream coming twice, once with kine as its symbol and then with ears of corn as its symbol, also attests 50 Not only do the kine and the ears allude to seven years of plenty and famine, they also indicate that the decree is established by God; i.e., it is unchangeable. that the thing is established by God. Furthermore, the occurrence of the two dreams in one night is proof that God will shortly bring it to pass. 51 The dream could have come on two different nights. The fact that it occurred twice in one night is proof that God is bringing it about soon. Our verse reads: The dream was doubled…twice. This appears redundant; hence I.E. explains was doubled came in two versions, twice, twice in one night. It is because the thing is established by God corresponds to was doubled ; and and God will shortly bring it to pass corresponds to twice.

Verse 33

Verse 34

LET PHARAOH DO THIS. Ya'aseh paro (literally let Pharaoh do) is short for let Pharaoh do according to the following council. Or ya'aseh (do) means get, like asah in My power and the might of my hand hath gotten (asah) me this wealth (Deut. 8:17). 52 According to this interpretation ya'aseh paro means let Pharoah get. Also according to this interpretation the object is missing. It should be read: Let Pharaoh get wheat (Weiser). AND TAKE UP THE FIFTH PART OF THE LAND. Let him buy a fifth of the produce of the land.

Verse 35

AND LAY UP CORN. The overseers. Some say that bar (corn) refers to corn in its ears. 53 Grain that has not been purified from its stubble (Weiser). However, I think that bar is the term applied to the corn after it has been fanned and cleansed. 54 Grain whose impurities have been removed. I.E. is paraphrasing Jer. 4:11. Our texts read, fanned or cleansed. Vat. Ebr. 38 reads, fanned and cleansed. We have followed the latter. To the one who says that the Egyptian air is damp because of the Nile and it is impossible for corn to last there for seven years, we reply that it is possible to mix corn with preservatives. 55 According to Bereshit Rabbah 90:5 this is precisely what Joseph did.

Verse 36

Verse 37

Verse 38

CAN WE FIND SUCH A ONE AS THIS. Nimtza (we find) is a nifal perfect and the meaning of ha-nimtza kha-zeh ish (can we find such a one as this) is, was such a one as this ever found in the world. It is also possible that the nun of nimtza is a first person plural prefix. 56 A nun is prefixed to the Hebrew root in the first person plural imperfect. According to this interpretation nimtza is a kal. In this case the word ha-nimtza (can we find) relates to what Pharaoh said to his servants. 57 The meaning of the phrase is, can we find such a one as this. The point is that nimtza can either be a third person singular nifal perfect or a first person plural kal imperfect. In the first instance it means was found, and relates to kha-zeh ish (such a one as this); in the second, it means we will find, and it relates to Pharaoh and his servants.

Verse 39

Verse 40

THOU SHALT BE OVER MY HOUSE. Thou shalt be chief over my house.
SHALL BE RULED. The shin of yishak (shall be ruled) has a dagesh to compensate for the missing nun of neshek (arms), 58 Yishak is a denominative of neshek (arms), and means will be armed. its meaning being Joseph will be commander of the army. 59 I.E. translates and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled as, and according unto thy word shall all my people be armed. Hence Joseph will be chief of the army. Others say that yishak is related to neshikah (kiss). 60 All the people will pay homage to Joseph by kissing him on the mouth (pikha) (Filwarg). Krinsky suggests translating it, thy word shall all my people kiss. Literally, pikha means thy mouth. However, the latter is far fetched.
ONLY IN THE THRONE WILL I BE GREATER THAN THOU. It is known that egdal (I will be greater) is an intransitive verb. The meaning of rak ha-kisse egdal mi-mekka is, I will not be greater than you except for the dignity of the throne. 61 Egdal being intransitive refers to Pharaoh and not the throne. The word gedelani (he grew up with me) in Nay from my youth he grew up with me (gedelani) as with a father (Job 31:18) is not a transitive verb 62 Meaning, brought me up. If gedelani was transitive it would disprove I.E.'s contention that egdal is intransitive since they are both kals. but an intransitive verb meaning he grew up with me. The juxtaposition of an intransitive verb (egdal) with the direct object (kisse) is found elsewhere in Scripture. 63 That is, found elsewhere in Scripture with a similar meaning, i.e., meaning, with regard to (Weiser, Krinsky). Usually only a transitive verb is connected to a direct object (Weiser). Hence I.E. points out that our verse is not unique. Compare, For ye shall be as a terebinth whose leaf fadeth (ke-elah novelet aleha) (Is. 1:30); 64 Novelet (fadeth) is intransitive, aleha (its leaves) is the object. I.E. renders novelet alehah as, which is withering with regards to its leaves. and and ye perish in the way (ve-tovedu derekh) (Ps. 2:12). 65 Ve-tovedu (you shall perish) is intransitive. Derekh (way) is the object. According to I.E. the meaning of ve-tovenu derekh is, and you shall perish with regard to the way. Similarly the meaning of our verse is, I will be greater than you with regard to the throne (Krinsky).

Verse 41

SEE, I HAVE SET THEE OVER ALL THE LAND. I have set thee above all the land of Egypt.

Verse 42

VESTURES OF FINE LINEN. I have explained the meaning of shesh (fine linen) in my comments on the Torah portion ve-yikchu li terumah (that they take for me an offering). 66 I.E. in Ex. 25:4 writes that shesh is white linen made from a type of flax which grows in Egypt.
A GOLD CHAIN. Revid (chain) is like marvadim (coverlets) in I have decked my couch with coverlets (marvadim) (Prov. 7:16). 67 I.E. explains revid (chain) to mean a coverlet (Krinsky, Weiser).

Verse 43

THE SECOND. Mishneh (the second) comes from the same root as shenayim (two). The king is like the numeral one, next comes the mishneh which means second to him, and afterward the shalish (adjutant) which means the same as shilishi (third). 68 I.E. points out that mishneh means second in rank and shalish third in rank (Netter). Mishneh can be taken to refer to the chariot, as Rashi interprets. Hence I.E. points out that mirkevet ha-mishneh (the second chariot) is to be rendered: the chariot of the second in rank (Cherez).
CHARIOT. A wooden chariot pulled by four horses, 69 Some interpret mirkevet (chariot) to mean a horse or mule. Cf. Rashi. as is evidenced by the chariot of Solomon. 70 We read in I Kings 10:29, And a chariot (merkavah) came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. Now four times 150 gives 600. Hence each chariot had four horses.
ABRECH. Every man called before him, I will bend the knee (avrekh) 71 Avrekh is a first person singular. However, the verb preceding it, va-yikre ’u (and they cried), is a plural. Thus rather than avrekh we would expect navrekh, hence I.E.’s comment. and I will bow down. The word avrekh is a hifil. However, the word va-yivrakh in and kneeled down (va-yivrakh) upon his knees (II Chron. 6:13) is a kal. Both words come from the same root, birkayim (knees). 72 Its root is bet, resh, caf. Rabbi Jonah, the Spanish grammarian, 73 Ibn Janah. said that avrekh is an infinitive, with an alef taking the place of the heh, 74 That is, avrekh is a variant of havrekh. This answers the question raised in note 70. According to this comment avrech is not a first person singular but rather an infinitive. The verse thus reads: and they cried before him, bend the knee (havrekh). This is also the opinion of Kimchi. as we find in the word ashkem in sending them betimes (ashkem) and often (Jer. 25:4). 75 Wherein ashkem is to be interpreted as if written hashkem. I.E. quotes Jer. 25:4, sending them betimes and often. However, in this verse the word for betimes is written hashkem with a heh. The reference therefore must be to Jer. 25:3 (speaking betimes and often) where the word for betimes is written ashkem with an alef. Either we have a scribal error or I.E. quoted from memory and erred. However, I believe that the alef of ashkem is a first person future prefix. 76 In other words a heh has not been substituted for an alef, its meaning being: I arose and spoke (Krinsky). Hence we cannot use Jer. 25:3 as an analogy for a heh being substituted for an alef.

Verse 44

I AM PHARAOH. I alone am king and aside from you no one is permitted to act freely. 77 I remain king. However, everyone else will be subservient to you (Cherez).
[HIS FOOT.] The meaning of his foot is permission to go any place. 78 Vat. Ebr. 38. The same applies to his hand ; i.e., no one may do anything without your (Joseph’s) permission (Weiser). It may also be a figurative expression. 79 His hand or his foot is not to be taken literally but

means do anything significant or insignificant (Weiser). The latter is its correct meaning.

Verse 45

ZAPHENATH-PANEAH. If this is an Egyptian word then we don't know what it means. 80 Since we don't understand ancient Egyptian we cannot unravel its meaning. On the other hand, if this is a Hebrew translation of Joseph's Egyptian name then we don't know what Joseph's Egyptian name was. In the latter case 81 If Zaphenath-paneah is Hebrew. the meaning of paneah is in accordance with Onkelos' translation, 82 Onkelos renders paneah as revealed. He renders zaphenath-paneah, a man before whom all secrets (tzefunot) are revealed. and it is a quadriliteral. 83 Its root being peh, ayin, nun, chet.
PRIEST OF ON. The term kohen (priest) can be applied to one who serves the Lord or to one who serves idols, for I believe that when this term is used in Scripture it means one who ministers. 84 I.E.'s point is that kohen does not mean a priest of the Lord; it means any priest. Hence kohen on means priest of On.
AND JOSEPH WENT OUT. His name went out, as in And thy renown went forth among the nations (Ezek. 16:14). 85 That is, Joseph was renowned throughout the land. Literally: And thy name went forth among the nations. "Thy name" meaning thy renown. Or it means he went out and traveled throughout the land and they announced who he was that he might become known. 86 Taking And Joseph went out literally and not applying it to his name.

Verse 46

Verse 47

Verse 48

ALL THE FOOD. All is not to be taken literally, for if it were, then all should have starved to death. All in And all countries came (v. 57) is similar. 87 It is not to be taken literally. It doesn't mean each and every individual came. The meaning of And he gathered up all the food is: and Joseph gathered as much of the food as he could.

Verse 49

Verse 50

Verse 51

FOR GOD HATH MADE ME FORGET. Its meaning is, because he said God hath made me forget. 88 This is an abridged statement as "because he said" has to be added between Manasseh and for God etc. Cf. I.E.'s comment on Gen. 26:7. Rabbi Judah, the first Hebrew grammarian, 89 Rabbi Judah ibn Hayyuj (c. 940-1010), the first Hebrew grammarian to put forth the idea that all Hebrew words come from a three letter root. He is considered the father of the science of Hebrew grammar (Weiser). says that nashani (made me

forget) follows the paradigm of channani (dealt graciously with me) (Gen. 33:11). 90 Channani comes from the root chet, nun, nun. Similarly nashani comes from the root nun, shin, shin. They are both kals. However, Rabbi Moses Ha-Kohen, the Spaniard, says that (in nashani) a pattach has been substituted for the chirik. 91 According to this opinion, nashani is a pi'el coming from the root nun, shin, heh. Compare, tzivvani whose root is tzadi, vav, heh. The problem is that the first letter of a pi'el perfect is vocalized with a chirik, and nashani is vocalized with a pattach, hence Rabbi Moses' explanation that a pattach has been substituted for a chirik. Thus nashani is a variant of nishani.

Verse 52

Verse 53

Verse 54

AND THE SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE BEGAN. Va-techillenah is a kal and comes from a root whose second and third letters are identical. 92 Its root is chet, lamed, lamed. This comment presents difficulties. Techillenah is obviously a hifil. If it were a kal it would be vocalized techullenah. Futhermore, this word is never encountered in the Bible in the kal. The entire comment is missing in Vat. Ebr. 38. Similarly S.D. Luzzato had manuscripts of I.E. which omitted this comment. For an attempt to justify this comment see Krinsky.
IN ALL LANDS. All the lands adjacent to Egypt. 93 Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 90:6, the hunger was in three lands, Phoenecia, Arabia and Palestine. The point is that if the hunger was in lands far from Egypt, how did they survive since they couldn't come to Egypt to buy food?

Verse 55

Verse 56

AND JOSEPH OPENED ALL. The storehouses which they had. 94 The verse literally reads: And Joseph opened what was ba-hem (in them). I.E. interprets ba-hem to mean, had with them, i.e., their storehouses.
AND SOLD UNTO THE EGYPTIANS. It means he gave corn (shever) to the Egyptians. 95 Va-yishbor (and sold) is a denominative of corn or grain. Va-yishbor refers to a corn purchase. 96 The Egyptians purchased the corn. Hence Joseph sold it. Thus va-yishbor means, and he sold (Krinsky). Va-yishbor usually means, and he bought corn. This is the sense in which this root is used throughout Chap. 42 and in Is. 55:1. However, here va-yishbor seems to mean, and he sold corn. I.E.'s apparent solution to the problem is to explain that va-yishbor can apply either to the seller or to the buyer as the transfer of corn (shever) is effectuated by two individuals, the one giving (selling) the corn and the other buying it. The aforementioned is how Kimchi explains va-yishbor and it appears to be the meaning of I.E.'s comment (Cherez).

Verse 57

TO JOSEPH TO BUY CORN. The clause is inverted 97 It literally reads: to buy corn to Joseph. and must be understood as: And all the countries came into Egypt to Joseph to buy corn.

Chapter 42

Verse 1

NOW JACOB SAW. Scripture interchanges 1 Scripture occasionally uses hear for see and see for smell. the way the senses 2 The five senses. are referred to because they are all perceived in one central place. 3 I.E. in his commentary on Eccles. 11:7 says that there is a place on the forehead where the senses are perceived. Thus Scripture says, See the smell of my son (Gen. 27:27); 4 Rather than smell the smell of my son. and And the light is sweet (Eccles. 11:7). 5 Even though light cannot be tasted. Now Jacob saw is similar, 6 Now Jacob saw means, now Jacob heard. for afterward Scripture states, Behold I have heard that there is corn in Egypt (v. 2).
WHY DO YOU LOOK ONE UPON ANOTHER. Lammah titra ’u (why do you look one upon another) means, don’t show yourselves as having an abundance of food. 7 Cf. Rashi, “Why do you show yourselves before the children of Ishmael and the children of Esau as having plenty to eat?” Why do you show yourselves is thus short for, why do you show yourselves as having an abundance of food. Or it may mean, do not quarrel with each other, as in Come, let us look one another (nitra’eh) in the face (II Chron. 25:17). 8 I.E. translates nitra’eh in II Chron. 25:17 as fight. Thus the root resh, alef, heh which usually means to see, at times also means to fight or quarrel. Hence titra ’u is similar to nitra’eh, i.e., it means to quarrel.

Verse 2

AND BUY FOR US. Ve-shivru lanu means, and buy corn for us. 9 I.E. notes that shivru means to buy grain. He points this out because in Gen. 41:56 it means to sell grain.

Verse 3

Verse 4

HARM. Death.

Verse 5

Verse 6

THAT SOLD. Ha-mashbir (that sold) comes from the same root as shever (corn). It means the seller. It is a causative verb. 10 That is, it is a hifil. He caused the wheat to be sold (Weiser).

Verse 7

BUT MADE HIMSELF STRANGE UNTO THEM. Va-yitnakker (but made himself strange) comes from the same root as nokhri (stranger). Its meaning is, he showed himself to be a stranger.
ROUGHLY. Kashot (roughly) is an adjective. Its meaning is rough words. 11 The word "words" has to be added to the text Thus rough (kashot) is short for rough words (Weiser). The Hebrew literally reads: and spoke rough (kashot) with them. Answereth impudent (Prov. 18:23) is similar. 12 Here, too, the word "words" is missing in the Hebrew. The verse should be understood as if written, answereth impudent words.
AND HE KNEW THEM. When Joseph first saw the group he recognized them as his brothers. 13 This is the meaning of and he knew them. He then looked at each one of them and recognized them individually. The latter is the meaning of And Joseph knew his brethren (v. 8). 14 Our verse reads, And He knew them. Verse 8 states, And Joseph knew his brethren. I.E. interprets our verse as referring to the brothers as a group and verse 8 to each individual brother.

Verse 8

Verse 9

THE NAKEDNESS OF THE LAND. Nakedness is a figure of speech for shame, since it is customary to hide one's nakedness because of its unseemliness. 15 Nakedness thus means shame. Weiser takes I.E.'s comment at face value and explains that shame refers to the shame of the country. Cherez explains that shame refers to the areas of the country open to invasion. Be that as it may, according to this interpretation, the nakedness of the land means the shame of the land. Or nakedness refers to secrets, since one's nakedness is covered. Joseph thus said to them, "You have come to learn the secrets of the land." I prefer the latter interpretation.

Verse 10

Verse 11

WE. Nachnu (we) is spelled without an alef. This is the correct form of the word. 16 According to I.E. nachnu is primary, anachnu secondary, as the alef of anachnu is superfluous (Filwarg, Weiser, Cherez). Cf. I.E. on Lam. 3:42.
UPRIGHT. Kenim means truthful. It is possible that kenim comes from the same root as ken (so) in So (ken) do, as thou hast said (Gen. 18:5). 17 The meaning of kenim anachnu (we are upright men) is we are so, we are as we appear, that is, people who came to buy grain. Or kenim comes from the same root 18 "Comes from the same root" means akin to or the same. as ken (truth) in The daughters of Zelophehad speak right (ken) (Num. 27:7). 19 According to this interpretation kenim anachnu means, we are truthful men.

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

AND YE SHALL BE BOUND. He'aseru 20 He'aseru is an imperative meaning bind yourselves. Now one cannot bind oneself, that is, put oneself in prison (Krinsky). Also, Simeon was bound, he did not bind himself (Filwarg). Hence I.E. points out that even though he'aseru is an imperative, here it has the meaning of an imperfect. should be rendered: ye shall be bound. It is similar to u-mot (and die) in and die in the mount (Deut. 32:50). 21 Die is an imperative, but it has the meaning of an imperfect; i.e., it means you will die. See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 1:22.

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

FAMINE OF YOUR HOUSES. Needed because of the famine of your houses. 22 The verse literally reads, shever ra'avon (com famine). This makes no sense, so I.E. interprets, com because of the famine. The meaning of havi'u shever ra'avon batekhem (carry corn for the famine of your houses) is, carry to your houses the corn needed because of the famine. 23 The verse literally reads, havi'u shever ra'avon batekhem (carry com famine your houses). I.E. says that havi 'u (carry) is to be connected to batekhem (your houses). Thus the meaning of the clause is: carry to your houses the com needed because of the famine (Krinsky, Cherez).

Verse 20

Verse 21

VERILY. Aval (verily) has the same meaning as aval in Verily (aval) Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son (Gen. 17:19). It means verily (Gen. 28:16). 24 The word aval also means but, however. Hence I.E. points out that here it means verily.

Verse 22

Verse 23

THE INTERPRETER. Ha-melitz means the interpreter. It is related to melitzah (figure of speech) (Prov. 1:6).

Joseph imprisoned Simeon because when many sin, the oldest is punished more severely than the others. He did not punish Reuben because he (Reuben) saved him. 25 Reuben was the eldest. However, he saved Jospeh and Joseph had no reason to imprison him. Hence he punished Simeon who was second to the eldest.

Verse 24

Verse 25

Rabbi Moses Ha-Kohen says that the words zahav (gold) and kesef (silver) are never encountered in the plural. 26 The reference must be to Scripture since we find plurals for gold and silver in Rabbinic literature. See Baba Metzia 42a; Shemot Rabbah 35. However, he forgot that Scripture employs the term kaspehem (money) (v. 25). 27 The singular would be kaspam (Filwarg).

Verse 26

[AND THEY LADED THEIR ASSES WITH THEIR CORN.] Which they had bought.

Verse 27

AND AS ONE OF THEM OPENED. Va-yiftach ha-echad means, and one of them opened. The reference is possibly to Reuben, as he was the first born. In this case ha-echad (one of them) means the first in number. 28 The term one (ha-echad) has the definite article prefixed to it. Thus it means the number one or the first one, that is, the eldest. If Scripture had meant one of them, it would have read echad.

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

THE FAMINE OF YOUR HOUSES. Needed for the famine that is in your houses. 29 See I.E.’s comment on verse 19 and the notes thereto.

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

ALL THESE THINGS. AU these troubles.

Verse 37

[THOU SHALT SLAY.] Some say that thou shalt slay means thou shalt punish. 30 Thou shalt slay is hyperbolic. Reuben did not expect Jacob to kill his grandchildren. Others say that this was a prayer to God. 31 Reuben directed the words Thou shalt slay to God, as if to say, Lord strike my sons dead if I bring not him to thee (to Jacob). This interpretation, too, seeks to get around the problem of Reuben telling his father to kill his grandchildren if he fails to return Benjamin safely. The sum of the matter is this, if Reuben would have spoken correctly Jacob would not have ignored him. 32 Had Reuben made sense, Jacob would have responded affirmatively to him (Weiser). Or we should render, if Reuben had spoken correctly then Jacob would not have shushed him by saying, My son shall not go down with you (Krinsky).

Chapter 43

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

BOTH WE. It is Hebrew style to add gam 1 The Hebrew literally reads: gam anachnu (also we), gam attah (also you), gam tappenu (also our little

ones). (also) even to the first of a series of items. 2 Gam means also. Hence it does not belong before the first of a series of items. Nevertheless, it is Hebrew style to place gam before the first particular in a series for purposes of emphasis (Weiser). Compare, Rule over us, also (gam) thou, also (gam) thy son, also (gam) thy son's son (Jud. 8:22).

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

DO THIS. Do according to the following counsel. 3 Zot (this) is feminine. The question thus arises, why did Jacob use the feminine zot asu (do this) rather than the masculine zeh asu? I.E.'s solution is that the word zot refers to etzah (council) which is feminine. It should be noted that etzah is not in the Biblical text (Cherez).
OF THE CHOICE FRUITS OF THE LAND. Zimrat (choice fruits) refers to all types of praiseworthy things. It comes from the same root as zemirot (songs) (Is. 24:16). 4 Things that one sings about, things that one praises. Krinsky explains I.E. as meaning the choicest fruits because of which the land is praised.
BALM AND…SPICERY. I have previously explained these terms. 5 See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 37:25.
NUTS. Batenim does not appear elsewhere in Scripture. 6 Hence we cannot be sure what it means. Some say it means nuts.

Verse 12

DOUBLE. Mishneh means second. 7 In addition to the money that you are returning, bring a second sum of money for the purchase of new food (Filwarg).
OVERSIGHT. Mishgeh (oversight) is a noun whose third root letter is a heh. 8 Its root is shin, gimel, heh.

Verse 13

Verse 14

[AND GOD ALMIGHTY.] This phrase means the one who has the power to do all these things.
IF I BE BEREAVED. As I was bereaved by the death of Joseph, I think that I will be bereaved of all my children. 9 According to Krinsky. The verse reads, va-ani ka'asher shakholti shakholti. The literal translation of the latter is, and as for me, as I was bereaved (shakholti), I was bereaved. I.E. explains that the second shakholti although a perfect, is to be rendered as an imperfect Thus our verse reads, and as for me, as I was bereaved, so will I be (I think I will be, I fear I will be) bereaved. He explains it to mean: as I was bereaved of Joseph, I now fear that I will be bereaved of all my children. Cf. I.E.'s commentary on Es. 4:16.

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

THAT HE MAY SEEK OCCASION AGAINST US. Le-hitgolel (that he may seek occasion) comes from the same root as bi-gelal 10 Hence it is similar in meaning to it He is seeking a cause, a reason. in that for (bi-gelel) this thing (Deut. 15:10).
AND FALL UPON US. As a man falls intentionally upon another and then says you tripped me. 11 That is, he is seeking to blame us for something we are not guilty of.

Verse 19

Verse 20

OH. Bi adoni (Oh, my lord) is a supplicatory expression. I believe it is an abridged statement. It is like, bi ani adoni he-avon (upon me, my lord, upon me be the iniquity) (I Sam. 25:24). Avon (iniquity) here 12 "Here" refers to I Sam. 25:24 and by extension to our verse which is short for bi adoni he-avon (Filwarg). Or "here" refers to our verse in which the word avon is to be inserted (Weiser). has the same meaning as avon in My iniquity (avoni) is greater than I can bear (Gen. 4:13). 13 Where avon (iniquity) means punishment. Cf. I.E. comments on Gen. 4:13. Thus bi adoni he-avon means, upon my lord be the punishment. The meaning of bi adoni he-avon is, do to me as you wish but first listen to me.

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

HATH GIVEN YOU TREASURE IN YOUR SACKS. It is possible that someone had a treasure in his house, hid it among the wheat in his storehouse and then forgot about it, and it was placed in your sacks by chance. 14 After it was delivered to the royal granaries. This must be the case because I have your money.

Verse 24

INTO JOSEPH'S HOUSE. The heh at the end of betah (into the house of) means to. The latter is Hebrew style. 15 A heh suffixed to a noun has the same meaning as the preposition el (to) placed before it. Hence betah yosef means into Joseph's house.

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

IS YOUR FATHER WELL, THE OLD MAN. Our verse has a noun (shalom) in place of an adjective (shalem). 16 Our verse reads, ha-shalom avikhem (is your father well). I.E. argues that according to the rule of Hebrew grammar the Bible should have read; ha-shalem avikhem and not ha-shalom avikhem since the former means, is your father well (shalem) while the latter means, is your father peace (shalom), an impossible statement. His solution is to suggest that ha-shalom avikhem is short for ha-shalom la avikhem. It is abridged, and should be read as if written, ha-shalom la-avikhem (is your father in peace). Ve-attah shalom (and peace be unto thee) (I Sam. 25:6) is similar. 17 I Sam. 25:6 reads, ve-attah shalom. According to I.E. it should have read, ve-attah shalem (and thou art well) since shalem is an adjective while shalom is a noun. Hence here, too, the verse is abridged and should be read as if written ve-attah shalom lekha.

Verse 28

AND THEY BOWED THE HEAD. Va-yikkedu (and they bowed the head) means, and they placed their head to the ground. Thus va-yishtachavu (and made obeisance) means, and they had bowed. 18 Scripture reads, va-yikkedu, va-yishtachavu. I.E. interprets va-yishtachavu as a pluperfect, they had bowed, since the bowing obviously preceded the placing of the head on the ground.

Verse 29

GOD BE GRACIOUS UNTO THEE. Yochnekhah (be gracious unto thee) does not fit into any paradigm. 19 The word comes from chet, nun, nun. Had it followed the paradigm of Hebrew double ayin roots, it would have been written yechannekha ; compare, yechannenu in Ps. 67:2 (Krinsky, Cherez). Perhaps it differs from the usual paradigms because of the chet which is a guttural. 20 To simplify its enunciation the kamatz was transferred from the chet to the yod and the dagesh dropped from the nun (Krinsky).

Verse 30

YEARNED. Nikhmeru (yearned) means burned and inflamed, as does nikhmeru (hot) in our skin is hot (nikhmoru) like an oven (Lam. 5:10).

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

AND PORTIONS WERE TAKEN. Masot (portions) means gifts. 21 Not portions of food but gifts (Cherez).
TIMES. Yadot (times) means portions.
AS ANY OF THEIRS. Benjamin's gifts were five times as great as the gift of any one of the brothers. 22 He had five times as much as any individual, not five times as much as all of them together. It is far-fetched to believe that Joseph gave Benjamin five gifts for every gift that he gave to each one of his brothers. 23 For this would come to 50 gifts. I.E. comments thus because the Hebrew reads: and Benjamin's portion was greater than the portions of all of them five times. He interprets kullam (all of them) as meaning, as any of them.

Chapter 44

Verse 1

Verse 2

MY GOBLET. Gavi 'a (goblet) means a cup.

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

AND WHEREBY HE INDEED DIVINETH. He used this cup to test you to see if you are thieves. 1 According to I.E. divineth means tested. Nachesh (divineth) in our verse is similar to nichashti (I have observed the signs) (Gen. 30:27). 2 However, in Gen. 30:27 I.E. explains nichashti to mean divines. Weiser explains I.E.'s comment on our verse as meaning tested by divination. However, this is not what I.E. seems to be saying. I.E. was apparently inconsistent. This is also the explanation of know ye not that such a man as I will indeed divine (v. 15). 3 That is, a man such as I will test you. Its meaning is, why were you not afraid to steal my goblet? I placed the goblet before you to test you. I looked aside and you stole it. 4 According to this interpretation bo in ve-hu nachesh yenachesh bo (and whereby he indeed divineth) means whereby, the meaning of the aforementioned being, and whereby he indeed tests. However, Rabbi Jonah says that bo (whereby) means for it. He interprets nachesh yenachesh bo as: he would indeed inquire of diviners for it. Similarly the meaning of I will indeed divine (v. 15) is: a man in my position has diviners. Some say that the cup had designs on it and that Joseph looked at the cup in the presence of his brothers and announced which of them was the oldest and which one was born next. 5 Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 92:5. The point being and whereby he divineth and I will indeed divine are to be taken literally. Joseph, of course, did not practice magic. However,

his servants and his brothers had no way of knowing this. Also according to this interpretation bo means whereby.

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

[CLEAR OURSELVES.] There is a tet in place of the tav of the hitpa'el conjugation in the word nitztaddak (clear ourselves) because the first root letter is a tzadi.
GOD HAS FOUND OUT THE INIQUITY OF THY SERVANTS. They spoke by way of parable. 6 Found implies that God was unaware of the sin till the present, and he now found it. However, nothing is hidden from the Lord. Hence God found is God, as it were, found (Krinsky). We committed a sin and it was, as it were, lost and long forgotten, but found today.
Or the iniquity of thy servants means the punishment of thy servants, as in My iniquity is greater than I can bear (Gen. 4:13). 7 See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 4:13. I.E. points out that iniquity (avon) at times has the meaning of punishment.

Verse 17

Verse 18

FOR THOU ART EVEN AS PHARAOH. Ki kha-mokha ke-faro means: thou art as the king 8 Pharaoh. and the king is as you. This is true in all instances where two cafs are prefixed to two words following each other. 9 As in our verse, ki-kha-mokha ke-faro. Compare, ke-ammi khe-ammekha (my people as thy people) (II Kings 3:7). 10 Here, too, we have two cafs, ke-ammi khe-ammekha (my people as thy people) which means my people as thy people and thy people as my people. The use of two cafs in this manner is an abridged form. 11 Thus ki kha-mokha ke-faro is short for thou art as Pharaoh and Pharaoh is as you.

Verse 19

Verse 20

WE HAVE A FATHER, AN OLD MAN. They indicated that their father was an old man because he could have been a relatively young man in view of the fact that the oldest among them was only 45 years old. 12 Joseph was at this time 39 years old (see I.E.'s comments on Gen. 37:3 and the notes thereto), and he was six years younger than Reuben since he was born in the 14th year of Jacob's stay in Laban's house while Reuben was born in the eighth year of that same stay. Reuben was thus 45 at this time.

Verse 21

THAT I MAY SET MINE EYES UPON HIM. That I may see him. 13 That I may set my eyes upon him may be interpreted to mean, that I will take care of him, as in Jer. 24:6 and 39:12, hence I.E.'s comment. See also Nahmanides.

Verse 22

FOR IF HE SHOULD LEAVE HIS FATHER, HIS FATHER WOULD DIE. Why didn't the one who lists the five undecided verses 14 Our text literally reads: For if he should leave his father, "he" would die. The "he" is vague. The Talmudic sage Isi ben Judah (Yoma 92a,b) lists five verses wherein it is impossible to determine concerning what or of whom the verse speaks. Our verse and Ruth 4:8 are not included. I.E. asks, why not. It should be noted that according to Nahmanides' reading, I.E. explains that the "he" in he would die refers to Jacob. In that case I.E. only questions why Ruth 4:8 is not included in Isi ben Judah's list. not include our verse and And he drew off his shoe (Ruth 4:8) among them. 15 It isn't clear whether the "he" in And he drew off his shoe refers to Boaz or the near kinsman.

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

SURELY HE IS TORN IN PIECES. Proof of which is, And I have not seen him since.

Chapter 45

Verse 1

REFRAIN HIMSELF. Le-hitappek (refrain himself) means to bear.
BEFORE ALL THEM THAT STOOD BY HIM. Its meaning is, until all that stood by him left. Joseph was therefore compelled to call and have them withdrawn. 1 Joseph could not bear to wait until all those in his presence left. He therefore had the hall cleared.

Verse 2

AND HE WEPT ALOUD. The word reads bi-vechi (wept) even though it is a pausal. 2 In such cases the word is vocalized with a sheva beneath the first bet and a segol beneath the second bet. Our word is vocalized chirik, sheva (Weiser). Oni (affliction) in I am the man that hath seen affliction (oni) (Lam. 3:1) is similar. 3 Oni in Lam. 3:1 is vocalized with a chataf kamatz even though it is a pausal. At such times the word is usually vocalized with a cholam. Cf. Deut. 16:3. We thus see that Scripture occasionally vocalizes a pausal as a non pausal.

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

BUT GOD. Sent me.
A FATHER. A teacher. Father in he was the father of all such as handle the harp and pipe (Gen. 4:21) is similar. 4 Jubal obviously was not the biological father of all harp and pipe players.

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

LEST THOU COME TO POVERTY. Tivvaresh (come to poverty) means thou be cut off. Le-horish in to drive out (le-horish) nations (Deut. 4:38) is similar. 5 The point is that the root yod, resh, shin, which usually means to inherit, can also mean to cut off, to destroy. I.E. renders Deut. 4:38 to destroy nations. He renders our verse, lest thou be destroyed (cut off).

Verse 12

THAT IT IS MY MOUTH. It is well known that peh (mouth) spelled peh, heh is in the absolute. However, when it appears in the construct the silent heh 6 The heh in peh is not sounded. changes to a silent yod, 7 Peh becomes pi (my mouth) or fi when the rules of grammar call for the omission of the dagesh. I.E. refers to the yod following a chirik as a silent yod. as in The mouth of (pi) the righteous (Ps. 37:30). The same form (pi) is also used for the plural, as in But the mouth (pi) of the wicked (Prov. 10:11). 8 Resha'im (wicked) is in the plural. Thus the mouth of the wicked should be rendered, the mouths of the wicked men (Cherez). Now when the yod that takes the place of the heh comes together with the yod of the first person pronominal suffix, one of the yods is dropped, 9 My mouth should be written peh, yod, yod, one yod serving as the first person pronominal suffix and the other substituting for the heh. However, one yod is dropped to simplify enunciation. Thus pi can mean either my mouth or mouth of. as in my mouth (fi) that speaketh. The meaning of my mouth that speaketh unto you is: I speak directly to you in Hebrew without the use of an interpreter.

Verse 13

Verse 14

NECK. Scripture employs both the plural and singular forms for the neck. 10 The singular of neck is tzavvar. Cf. Is. 8:8 and Jer. 28:10; tzavvare is a plural. However, the plural is occasionally also used for the singular when this noun is employed. We also find the word for neck spelled with a nun. 11 Cf. tzavveronayikh (thy neck) in Cant. 4:9. However, its alef is never dropped. 12 According to Weiser. The problem is that there is no alef in tzavveronayikh. Filwarg suggests that in I.E.'s copy of the Bible tzavveronayikh had an alef. Also, Kimchi in his book of roots says that tzavveronayikh is spelled with an alef. Weiser suggests that what I.E. means is that tzavveronayikh should have been written with an alef but for some reason it was dropped.

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

LADE. Ta'anu means load. The word meto'ane in thrust through (meto'ane) with the sword (Is. 14:19) is close in meaning to it. 13 I.E. renders this, laden with wounds of the sword (Krinsky). It is noteworthy that in Isaiah, I.E. says that it is farfetched to connect ta'anu to meto'ane ; therefore he connects meto'ane with an Arabic word meaning pierced.
BEASTS. Be'irekhem means your cattle. Be'irenu in we and our cattle (u-ve-irenu) (Num. 20:4) is similar.

Verse 18

THE FAT OF THE LAND. Its meaning is shuman ha'aretz (fat of the land). 14 What I.E. apparently intends to say is that since the choicest part of an animal is its shuman (fat), it follows that the fat of the land is a metaphor for the best of the land (Weiser).

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

CHANGES OF RAIMENT. Two garments, each different from the other, two being the minimum for a plural. 15 Chalifot semalot (changes of raiment) is in the plural. The minimum of the plural is two. Hence two garments are implied. Had Scripture intended more than two their number would have been listed, as in the case of Benjamin. Chalifot (changes) implies each garment was different from the other. He didn't give them two identical garments (Cherez).

Verse 23

[IN LIKE MANNER.] That is, of the finest changes of raiment 16 Ke-zot (in like manner) not only applies to what follows but also to what comes before, viz., garments (Weiser). Or ke-zot applies only to what comes before; i.e., the verse is to be understood: And to his father he sent in like manner ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, viz., the finest changes of raiment that were found in Egypt (Cherez). that were found in Egypt.
CORN. Bar (corn) means grain.
AND BREAD. That is to be taken literally. 17 Lechem (bread) can mean food, hence I.E.'s comment.

AND VICTUAL. The term mazon (victual) refers to peas, beans, lentils, millet, spelt, figs, raisins and dates, for only these, excluding wheat 18 I.E. reads dagan (grain) but he means wheat (Weiser). and barley, are termed mazon. 19 Wheat and barley are not deemed mazon but bar (Krinsky, Filwarg).

Verse 24

[SEE THAT YE FALL NOT OUT BY THE WAY.] Don't be angry with each other because of my being sold into slavery. 20 I.E. renders tirgizu (fall out) as be angry (Cherez); i.e., don't be angry and thus quarrel with each other, the idea being, don't be angry that you sold me and thus quarrel with each other about who was responsible. It should be noted that in Ps. 4:5 I.E. renders rigzu as fear.

Verse 25

Verse 26

AND HIS HEART FAINTED. Va-yafag (fainted) comes from the same root as fugat 21 That is, stop. in Give thyself no respite (fugat) (Lam. 2:18). It means his heart stopped and was still. It has the same meaning as and his heart died within him (I Sam. 25:37). Jacob reacted in this manner because he didn't believe them. 22 Jacob reacted in this manner because what his sons said reminded him that Joseph was dead. However, when he saw the wagons, his spirit revived. Do not be surprised at the term his heart stopped for it is the style of the prophets to speak in hyperbole. Compare, neither was there breath left in me (Dan. 10:17).

Verse 27

Verse 28

IT IS ENOUGH; JOSEPH MY SON IS YET ALIVE. This happiness is enough for me. 23 The Hebrew reads, Enough, Joseph my son is yet alive. I.E. suggests that enough is short for "this happiness is enough for me" (Weiser). What Jacob was saying was, I am not concerned with the fact that he is a ruler over Egypt; the fact that he is alive is joy enough for me (Krinsky). Cherez suggests rendering I.E., I have great happiness since Joseph is yet alive.

Chapter 46

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

TO GO DOWN. Me-redah (to go down) is an infinitive. Its first root letter is missing. 1 Me-redah is made up of the infinitive redah (go down) plus the prepositional mem. The root of redah is yod, resh, dalet. Me-redah is similar to tenah in Whose majesty is rehearsed (tenah) above the heavens (Ps. 8:2). 2 The root of tenah is nun, tet, nun. Both redah (whose yod is missing) and tenah (whose nun is missing) are infinitives whose first root letters are missing.

Verse 4

[AND I WILL ALSO SURELY BRING THEE UP AGAIN.] This means you will be buried in the land of Israel. 3 Jacob never came back from Egypt. Hence I.E. interprets our verse as referring to Jacob's body.
AND JOSEPH SHALL PUT HIS HAND UPON THINE EYES. At the time of your death. It is customary for the living to close the eyes of the deceased upon their death.

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

HIS DAUGHTERS. This refers only to Dinah. 4 Jacob had no other daughters. It is possible that Dinah had maid servants of her own age who grew up with her in Jacob's house and who because of Dinah are called Jacob's daughters. Jacob's "daughters" can be compared to Michal's "children" (II Sam. 21:8). 5 Michal's "children" were in fact the children of Merab. Scripture refers to them as Michal's children because she raised them. Cf. Sanhedrin. 19b. See also I.E.'s comments on Gen. 36:2 and the notes thereto. The same interpretation is to be given to and his sons' daughters since Jacob had only one granddaughter. 6 Serah, the daughter of Asher (v. 17). There, too, "daughters" refers to the maid-servants who grew up with her.

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

THE SON OF A CANAANITISH WOMAN. This proves that Jacob's sons married Aramean, Egyptian, Edomite and Midianite women. 7 The fact that Scripture singles out Shaul as being the son of a Canaanitish woman indicates that only he was the son of a Canaanitish woman, but not the others mentioned here. That Simeon did wrong in marrying her is obvious since Abraham told his servant not to take a Canaanitish woman for Isaac, and Isaac told the same to Jacob. Shaul's mother's nationality is singled out in order to indicate that Simeon did wrong in marrying a Canaanitish woman. It is for this reason that Scripture records the death of Er and Onan (v. 12). Scripture records their demise in order to indicate that they died because they were the sons of a Canaanitish woman (Gen. 38:2). 8 The

Canaanite women were evil. Er and Onan followed in their mother's footsteps and were punished by God. Scripture thus mentions their death as an object lesson (Filwarg).

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

AND NAAMAN. This Naaman was a son of Benjamin. I note this because Benjamin also had a grandson called Naaman (Num. 26:40).

Verse 22

Verse 23

AND THE SONS OF DAN: HUSHIM. It is possible that Dan had two sons and one of them died and Scripture did not mention him. 9 Scripture says "sons" but lists only one son, hence I.E.'s comment. It is also possible that the verse employs "sons" for stylistic reasons. 10 Since Scripture used sons of with regard to the other children, it employs the same form here

for the sake of consistency (Weiser). Nahmanides (v. 7) writes, “It is Biblical style to refer to an individual in the plural form when mentioning the genealogy of any people. For example, And the sons of Dan: Hushim ; (Gen. 46:23) And of the sons of Palu: Eliab (Num. 26:8).” This is apparently what I.E. had in mind (Krinsky).

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

[ALL THE SOULS OF THE HOUSE OF JACOB, THAT CAME INTO EGYPT, WERE THREESCORE AND TEN.] An exegate says that three score and ten is a round number, since in fact they numbered sixty-nine. 11 The names of Jacob’s descendants listed in our chapter come to 69, not 70. However, this commentator erred, since we find Scripture stating, with regard to Leah’s offspring who numbered thirty-two, all the souls of his sons and daughters were thirty and three (v. 15). 12 Verses 8-14 list the children of Leah and their offspring. Thirty-two individuals are listed by name. However, in giving their total Scripture says they were thirty-three. Now 70 is a round number with regard to 69. However, 33 is not a round number with regard to 32. It should be noted that it is the one person missing from the list of Leah’s offspring that is missing from our list of 70; i.e., if Leah’s thirty-three were listed here, we would have 70. The Midrash tries to solve the problem by saying that Jochebed was born between the ramparts when they entered Egypt. 13 Baba Batra 123a-b. The point being that when Jacob was going down to Egypt, Jochebed was yet in her mother’s womb and could not be counted as a person. However, as soon as the Israelites come to Egypt she was born. Hence 70 descendants of Jacob came to Egypt. However, this, too, presents a problem, viz., why doesn’t Scripture record the great wonder of Jochebed giving birth to Moses when she was one hundred and thirty years old? 14 According to Talmudic tradition the Israelites were in Egypt for 210 years (Seder Olam). Moses was 80 at the time of the Exodus (Ex. 7:7); thus Moses was born 130 years after the descent into Egypt. If his mother was born at the beginning of the descent then she had to be 130 years old at the time of Moses’ birth. Furthermore, why does Scripture note that Sarah was ninety when she bore a son? 15 When the Torah doesn’t see fit to note that Jochebed was 130 when she brought a child into the world. And as if we didn’t have enough problems with the above, the liturgical poets composed a hymn for Simchat Torah reading, Jochebed my mother will be comforted after me thereby indicating that Jochebed was two hundred and fifty years old at the time of Moses’ death. 16 If this is really so, why wasn’t Jochebed’s longevity mentioned in Scripture? As to the Midrash which states that Ahijah the Shilonite lived for hundreds of years, 17 Cf. Baba Batra 121b and Seder Olam 1. There it is stated that the prophet Ahijah, who prophesied during the reign of King Jeroboam, saw Amram the father of Moses. Ahijah thus lived close to 600 years. This is therefore a greater miracle than that of Jochebed, and yet Scripture doesn’t mention it. Hence this Midrash can serve as support for the liturgical poets that Scripture omits certain miracles (Cherez). Krinsky explains

that the liturgical poets can argue that if Ahijah could live 600 years, why is it hard to believe that Jochebed was still alive at the time of Moses' death? it is an aggadic statement or an individual opinion. 18 It is therefore not binding and cannot be offered as proof. I believe that the way to solve our problem is by recognizing the fact that the Bible includes Jacob among the seventy who came into Egypt and starts the count of the seventy from him. The verse (15) is to be interpreted as if it read: all the souls of his sons and his daughters plus himself were thirty-three. Proof that this is the way to interpret this verse is that Scripture previously states, And these are the names of the children of Israel, who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons (v. 8). 19 We thus see that Jacob is included in the number of those who came to Egypt. Should one argue and say, "Does not Scripture explicitly state, And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls (Ex. 1:5)? 20 Jacob obviously cannot be included in those that came out of his loins. Know that Scripture isn't concerned with noting that one of the seventy did not come from Jacob's loins, as it didn't bother to leave out Benjamin when it said, These are the sons of Jacob, that were born to him in Paddan-aram (Gen. 35:26), even though Benjamin was not born there. We have two proofs in our own Torah portion that this is the style of Scripture. First, the Pentateuch states, And these are the names of the children of Israel, who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons (v. 8). The Torah thus includes Jacob among the sons of Israel. It does so because Scripture speaks of the majority of those who came to Egypt. Secondly, Scripture states, all the souls of the house of Jacob, that came into Egypt, were three score and ten (Gen. 46:27). However, Manasseh and Ephraim did not come into Egypt, they were there to begin with, having been born in Egypt. 21 Yet Scripture lists them among those who came to Egypt (v. 20). In the same vein another verse 22 So Vat. Ebr. 38. reads, Thy fathers went down into Egypt with three score and ten souls (Deut. 10:22). 23 Nefesh has been translated as souls, in keeping with I.E.'s translation. However, as noted, Manasseh and Ephraim did not go down to Egypt. This verse 24 The reference is either to verse 27 (Krinsky) or both verse 27 and Deut. 10:22 (Cherez), or possibly only to Deut. 10:22. is also proof that Jacob is counted among the seventy, for he had a soul 25 All the souls of the house of Jacob, that came into Egypt, were three score and ten. Since Jacob had a soul he is included in the souls that came into Egypt and similarly with Deut. 10:22. and he was the most important of them all. 26 Hence it is unlikely that he would not be included in the number of those that went down (Weiser).

Verse 28

Verse 29

AND JOSEPH MADE READY HIS CHARIOT. Joseph commanded it ready. 27 A man of Joseph's position would not personally make ready his chariot, hence I.E.'s comment. However, since he commanded that his chariot be made ready it is as if he himself did it. So Solomon built the house, and finished it (I Kings 6:14), 28 Solomon obviously did not personally build the house. He ordered it built. is similar.

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

FOR EVERY SHEPHERD IS AN ABOMINATION UNTO THE EGYPTIANS. This verse shows that in those days the Egyptians did not eat meat and they did not permit anyone to slaughter sheep. This is still the custom among the Indians. The Egyptians considered shepherds an abomination because they drank milk. 29 Although the Egyptians allowed shepherds in their country, they did not allow them to slaughter sheep. However, they permitted them to drink milk, although they detested them for it. The people of India until this very day do not eat or drink anything derived from a living creature.

Chapter 47

Verse 1

IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN. The land of Goshen refers to the entire land, the land of Rameses (v. 11) to an area within it. 1 In our verse we are told that the Israelites lived in the land of Goshen. However, verse 11 tells us that they lived in the land of Rameses. I.E. solves this discrepancy by explaining that the land of Goshen was divided into a number of subdivisions one of which was called Rameses (Weiser). Thus the Israelites dwelt both in the land of Rameses and in the land of Goshen. The ayin in Rameses is vocalized with a quiescent sheva. I believe that the city Raamses (Ex. 1:11) which is vocalized with a pattach beneath the ayin 2 Rameses and Raamses have identical consonants. They differ only with regard to the vocalization of the ayin. is not to be identified with the Rameses in which the Israelites dwelt, for Raamses was one of the store cities that the Israelites built for Pharaoh. 3 It was not even in existence when the Israelites came to Egypt.

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

RULERS OVER MY CATTLE. Such as horses and mules. 4 I.E. explains thus because he held that the Egyptians did not keep sheep. Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 46:34 (Cherez).

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

LANGUISHED. Va-telah (languished) follows the paradigm of va-teta (and strayed) (Gen. 21:14). 5 The root of va-tela is lamed, heh, heh. The root of va-teta is tav, ayin, heh. Both words drop the final root letter and are similarly vocalized. Similarly ke-mitlahle'ah (as a madman) (Prov. 26:18) is like ki-metate'ah (as a mocker) (Gen. 27:12). 6 Both of these words also follow similar patterns in their quadriliteral form. In Prov. 26:18 and in Gen. 27:12 these words appear as quadriliteral; i.e., their first root letters are similarly doubled forming the stems lamed, heh, lamed, heh and tav ayin, tav ayin. Its meaning is, the land was like a person who has lost his wits. 7 Its inhabitants couldn't think clearly because of exhaustion (Krinsky). Thus according to I.E. va-telah means crazed. Cf. I.E. on Prov. 26:18 and Kimchi on our verse.

Verse 14

Verse 15

WAS ALL SPENT. Va-yittom (was all spent) comes from a root whose second and third letters are identical. 8 Its root is tav, mem, mem and it is a kal (Filwarg). It is similar to va-yiddom (stood still) in And the sun stood still (va-yiddom) (Josh. 10:13). 9 Its root is dalet, mem, mem. It, too, is a kal (Filwarg).

Verse 16

GIVE. According to the rules of Hebrew grammar the heh of havu should have been vocalized with a chataf pattach. 10 The root of havu is yod,

heh, bet. Such a word drops its first root letter in the plural masculine imperative and its second root letter is vocalized with a sheva. Compare, yada and yatza which in the imperative plural masculine become de ’u and tze ’u. Thus havu should have a chataf pattach beneath the heh. However, it does not. The heh is vocalized with a kamatz. It is therefore irregular.
IF MONEY FAIL. Afes (fail) is a perfect. 11 A third person perfect is usually vocalized kamatz, pattach. However, some words are conjugated according to the paradigm of pa’el. These words are vocalized kamatz, tzere both in the third person masculine perfect and in the present tense. Thus afes can either be a perfect or a participle, hence I.E.’s comment. It is similar to the word yare 12 See above note. I.E. points out that yare is a third person masculine perfect. in for he feared (yare) to dwell in Zoar (Gen. 19:30).

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

[WHEREFORE SHOULD WE DIE…BOTH WE AND OUR LAND.] One should not be surprised that the Bible employs the term death to the land. We also find the reverse in Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are thereon…and Thou givest them all life (Neh. 9:6). 13 Translated according to I.E. In this verse we find life, which is the opposite of death, applied to heaven and earth.
BE NOT DESOLATE. Tesham (be desolate) comes from the same root as tishamenah in and the high places shall be desolate (tishamenah) (Ezek. 6:6). Tesham follows the paradigm of teda (she will know). 14 According to I.E. the root of tesham is yod, shin, mem (Filwarg). The yod drops out and the letters prefixed to the root which indicate that the word is an imperfect are vocalized with a tzere, as in the case of the imperfect of the word yada from the root yod, dalet, ayin. The Midrash tells us that the hunger ceased because of Jacob’s merit. 15 Bereshit Rabbah 89:11. See also Tosephta, Sotah 10, “Before Jacob came down to Egypt there was a famine there…after he came there Scripture tells us, Then Joseph said unto the people…Lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass at the ingatherings (Gen. 47:23-24), which indicates that the famine ceased.” However, it is possible that the hunger lasted for seven years but that it was less intense in the final three years than during the first four years. 16 I.E. wants to reconcile the Midrash with Joseph’s prophecy that there would be seven years of hunger. He does so by accepting the fact that there were seven years of hunger and interprets the Midrashic statement as meaning that the hunger eased. It should be noted that Vat. Ebr. 38 has the reading: “The Midrash tells us that the hunger ceased because of Jacob’s merit. This is possible. It is also possible that the hunger continued during the last three years of the famine but that it was less intense than during the first four years.” According to Weiser, I.E. is of the opinion that Joseph’s collection of the money (v. 14 and 15); of the cattle (v. 16 and 17); and of buying the land (v. 18 and 19) took place successively during the last three years of the famine and that it eased during these years. For another interpretation see Filwarg, Weiser and Krinsky.

Verse 20

Verse 21

AND AS FOR THE PEOPLE, HE REMOVED THEM. He uprooted each and every Egyptian from his place. 17 The verse reads, ve-et ha-am he-evir oto le-arim (And as for the people, he removed them city by city). Am (people) is a plural. Oto (him) is a singular, hence I.E.'s interpretation (Krinsky). This is the way I.E. explains the combination of singulars and plurals. Some say that Scripture speaks of the people of Egypt's main city. Joseph removed them from the capital to villages so that they would till the soil. 18 Ve-et ha-am he-evir oto le-arim literally means: And as for the people, he removed them to the cities, hence I.E.'s second interpretation.

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

THE PRIESTS. This is to be rendered as Onkelos does. 19 Onkelos renders kohanim pagan priests.

Verse 27

AND THEY GOT THEM POSSESSIONS THEREIN. They bought property with title. 20 The text reads, va-ye'achazu vah (and they got them possessions therein). Va-ye'achazu is a denominative of achuzah which means property with a title.

Verse 28

Verse 29

AND JACOB LIVED. The terms put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh and kindly and truly have been explained in the account dealing with Eliezer. 21 Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 27:2 and 24:49.

Verse 30

BUT WHEN I SLEEP WITH MY FATHERS. This is a euphemism for death. 22 According to this interpretation the verse reads, But when I die (when I sleep with my fathers), thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in

their burying-place. Or it may mean: bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt (v. 29), but I will sleep (be buried) with my fathers. 23 According to this interpretation, ve-shakhavti im avotai (but when I sleep with my fathers) means, but I will be buried with my fathers. The latter will come to pass because thou shalt carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place. 24 The verse reads, But when I sleep with my fathers, thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place. If ve-shakhavti im avotai (but when I sleep with my fathers) means I will be buried with my fathers, then the verse is redundant, hence I.E.'s interpretation.

Verse 31

AND ISRAEL BOWED DOWN. He payed homage to Joseph because he held royal position. However, I believe it means he bowed to God in praise. Our verse is different from the verse which records the bowing of Abraham (Gen. 23:7), for in the latter case it is explicitly stated that Abraham bowed to the children of Heth. 25 Gen. 23:7 tells us that Abraham bowed before the children of Heth. Some interpret that verse to mean that Abraham bowed before God. I.E. on Gen. 23:6 rejects that interpretation on the grounds that Scripture explicitly states, And Abraham rose up, and bowed down to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. However, here Scripture does not explicitly state that Jacob bowed down to Joseph. Hence we may interpret that Jacob bowed to God. Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 23:6 and the notes thereto.

Chapter 48

Verse 1

THAT ONE SAID TO JOSEPH. Someone said to Joseph. 1 The subject of va-yomer (and he said) is omitted. Whom she bore to Levi in Egypt (Num. 26:59) is similar. 2 Scripture similarly omits the subject. The translation of Num. 26:59 is a literal one.

Verse 2

AND ONE TOLD JACOB. Someone told Jacob. 3 The subject of va-yagged (and he told) is omitted. Or it may refer to the one who said to Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick. On the other hand, he may have been a messenger sent by Jacob. 4 And he told refers to a messenger sent by Jacob to Joseph requesting that he come to see him. This messenger came back and he told Jacob…Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee.

Verse 3

Verse 4

[BEHOLD, I WILL MAKE THEE FRUITFUL.] According to Saadiah Gaon Jacob told Joseph: God appeared to me and told me, Behold I will make thee fruitful. However, following this promise I had no other children, and Rachel died. I now know that the Divine promise of Behold, I will make thee fruitful was said concerning your children. 5 Hence Ephraim and Manasseh…shall be mine (v. 5). This interpretation is totally unpalatable. What difference is there between Joseph's children and Reuben's children? 6 How did Jacob know the promise referred to Joseph's children and not to Reuben's

children when both are his descendants and the Divine promise, Behold, I will make thee fruitful could apply to both? Furthermore, Benjamin was born after this prophetic vision. 7 The vision in which God told Jacob, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, is recorded in Gen. 35:9-16. Benjamin's birth follows immediately in verse 18. Hence it may refer to him. I believe that Jacob told Joseph the following: "God appeared to me and told me that the land of Canaan will be an everlasting possession for my children. I now give you a first born's share 8 Since the land was given to me, I may pass it on as I see fit. in this land. Therefore let Ephraim and Manasseh share in the land in the same manner as Reuben and Simeon, my two eldest sons (v. 5). However, any children that will be born to you in addition to Ephraim and Manasseh 9 Viz., And thy issue, that thou begettest after them. I.E. explains holadta (literally, you begat) as an imperfect, you will beget. shall be called after the name of their just noted brothers, namely, they will receive their inheritance among them (v. 6). 10 They will be included in the Ephraimites and Manassites. I take issue with the one who interprets And thy issue, that thou begettest after them (v. 6) as referring to the children of Machir the son of Manasseh who were born upon Joseph's knees (Gen. 50:23). If his interpretation is correct, why does Scripture say, they shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance (v. 6)? 11 Machir's children received Machir's share in the land. Hence Scripture should have stated "after the name of their father" in their inheritance. And what if one argues, but we do not find that Joseph had any other children after Manasseh and Ephraim? 12 If Scripture tells us, and thy issue, that thou begettest after them, then it must be true. If we cannot apply it to Joseph's sons other than Manasseh and Ephraim, since he had no others, then the Bible must be referring to grandchildren. It is not convincing. It is quite possible that Joseph had additional children but they are not mentioned because they received their inheritance among their brothers. 13 Since they were included in the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim, there was no reason to mention them. There are many other such instances in Scripture. 14 Where names were left out because they had no significance.

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

[AND AS FOR ME, WHEN I CAME FROM PADDAN.] Rachel died suddenly and I was not able to transport her to the cave of Machpelah and inter her there, as I did with Leah. Jacob told this to Joseph so that he would not be angry with him for requesting that he do for him what he didn't do for his mother.

Verse 8

[AND ISRAEL BEHELD JOSEPH'S SONS.] After stating in our verse, And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, how could Scripture go on to say, Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see (v. 10)? The answer is, so that he could not see means he was not able to see clearly and recognize their faces.

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

[I HAD NOT THOUGHT.] Pillalti (I thought) means, my mind never judged that I would ever see you. It comes from the same root as pelilim (judges) (Deut. 32:31). 17 Its root is peh, lamed, lamed.

Verse 12

AND JOSEPH BROUGHT THEM OUT FROM BETWEEN HIS KNEES. This verse should have followed And he blessed them that day, etc. (v. 20). 15 So Krinsky, Weiser and Cherez. The point being that Manesseh and Ephraim were between Joseph's knees until the conclusion of the blessing. Hence our verse should have followed verse 20. However, the problem remains, why is this verse misplaced? Filwarg interprets I.E. as saying that Scripture first summarizes what transpired during the blessing and then goes into detail, that is, Scripture in verses 9-12 tells us that Joseph brought his children to Jacob and that Jacob placed them between his knees, kissed them and blessed them and that Joseph took them from between his knees, and bowed in gratitude before his father for blessing his children. Then in verses 13-20 the Bible tells us exactly what transpired during the blessing.
[FROM BETWEEN HIS KNEES.] Jacob sat on the edge of the bed. 16 Jacob sat on the edge of the bed with his feet on the ground and Manasseh and Ephraim were between his knees (Cherez).

Verse 13

AND JOSEPH TOOK THEM BOTH. Its meaning is: And Joseph had taken them both. 18 In other words va-yikkach (took) is a pluperfect that means had taken. In verse 9 we are told that Jacob told Joseph, Bring them (your sons), I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. Verse 10, while stating that Jacob kissed them, does not state that Joseph brought them to his father. This is stated in verse 13. Filwarg in keeping with his interpretation of I.E., viz., that verses 9-12 summarize what happened and verses 13-20 tell in detail what occurred, interprets as follows: Scripture is about to relate the details of the blessing. It begins by telling that Joseph had brought his children to his father in the following manner, Ephraim in his right hand and Manasseh in his left hand. I have already noted many other such instances. 19 Of the pluperfect in Scripture. See I.E.'s comments on Gen. 1:9.

Verse 14

GUIDING HIS HANDS WITTINGLY. His hands, as it were, understood what he wanted to do. 20 The verse reads: sikkel et yadov, which literally means, he imparted wisdom to his hands. Hence his hands "understood" his intentions.
FOR MANASSEH WAS THE FIRST-BORN. Even though (ki) Manasseh was the first-born. 21 In other words, ki (for) is to be rendered even though, i.e., Jacob placed his left hand upon Manasseh's head even though Manasseh was the first born. The word ki in O Lord, let the Lord…go in the midst of us, even though (ki) it is a stiff-necked people (Ex. 34:9) is similar.

There are many similar instances. 22 Where the word ki has the meaning of even though.

Verse 15

Verse 16

[THE ANGEL WHO HATH REDEEMED ME.] The meaning of this will be found in the Torah portion Ve-eleh shemot (Ex. 23:20).
AND LET MY NAME BE NAMED IN THEM. All of Israel will be called Ephraim 23 The Bible refers to Israel as Ephraim in Hos. 7:1; 10:6; 11:3; 12:1; and Jer. 31-20. According to I.E. and let my name be named in them means that all of Israel will be called Ephraim. Nachmanides objects. He argues that if this were the interpretation they would also be called by the name of Manasseh since the text reads, in them. and Joseph. 24 The Bible refers to Israel as Joseph in Ps. 80:2; 81:6; and Zech. 10:6. Scripture also states, A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children; she refuseth to be comforted for her children, Because they are not (Jer. 31:15), 25 The children of the other matriarchs also went into exile. However, the Bible mentions only Rachel weeping for her children. We thus see that all of Israel is called after Rachel's children. because Jacob considered Rachel to be his true mate. 26 The Hebrew reads, ikkar machasahvto, the main one of his thoughts. Rachel was the one Jacob originally wanted to marry and the one whom he loved. It was only due to circumstances that he married Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah. Hence Scripture says, The sons of Rachel Jacob's wife (Gen. 46:19). 27 Jacob's wife is an appellation not used with reference to any of Jacob's other wives. Similarly, as soon as Rachel bore a son, Jacob said to Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country (Gen. 30:25). He also gave the birthright to Joseph because he was the first born of his true mate. When Reuben showed himself unfit for the birthright he transferred it to Joseph who was Rachel's first born, rather than to Dan or Gad because they were sons of the handmaidens. 28 Dan was Bilhah's first born (Gen. 30:6). Gad was Zilpah's first born (Gen. 30:11). Jacob thus gave the birthright to Joseph even though Dan and Gad were older than Joseph and were first born. He did this because Joseph was the first born of Rachel and they of handmaidens. [17. HIS RIGHT HAND.] The right hand is more honored and is stronger than the left. 29 According to Weiser.

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

A MULTITUDE OF NATIONS. Many nations shall descend from him 30 The verse reads, melo ha-goyim. Its literal translation is, a fullness of the nations. I.E. points out that melo (fullness) is to be rendered as many, a multitude. Filwarg asks, "Who were the many nations descended from Ephraim?"

Verse 20

BY THEE SHALL ISRAEL BLESS. All the Israelites. 31 Israel here doesn't refer to Jacob but to all of Jacob's descendants (Krinsky).
AND HE SET EPHRAIM BEFORE MANASSEH. In the enunciation of the blessing. 32 Viz., "God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh."

Verse 21

Verse 22

ONE PORTION. Some say that shekhem (portion) alludes to the city of Shechem which was in the portion of the land allotted to Joseph.
With my sword and with my bow refers to God, as in David's statement, The lord is my rock…My shield and my horn of salvation (Ps. 18:3; II Sam. 22:3). 33 That is, with the help of God, who is my sword and bow. However, I believe that shekhem means a portion and shekhem echad is to be rendered one portion. The word shekhem is related to the words shikhmam (their shoulders) and shekhem (shoulder) in, upon their shoulders (shichmam) (Ex. 12:34), and To serve Him with one consent (shekhem echad) (Zeph. 3:9). 34 A portion is called a shekhem (shoulder) because the shoulder is a part of the body (Filwarg).
ABOVE THY BRETHREN. More than thy brethren. 35 The reference is to Joseph's receiving a double portion in the land of Canaan (Filwarg).
[WHICH I TOOK.] Its meaning is: which the Israelites will take with their sword and with their bow. 36 Jacob will conquer the land via his children. I.E. holds that lakachti (took), a perfect, is to be understood as an imperfect, viz., will take. I.E. later explains why Jacob used a perfect. Jacob singled out the Amorites because there were none among the seven Canaanite nations equal in strength to them. Observe, after the two mighty Amorite kings were slain 37 Sihon and Og. Cf. Num. 21:21ff. Joshua said (Josh. 7:7), Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over the Jordan, 38 After defeating Sihon and Og. to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, 39 We thus see that Joshua referred to all of Canaan as the land of the Amorite. to cause us to perish? Jacob's statement, Which I took, presents no problems 40 If Jacob was speaking of the future, why did he use the perfect lakachti (took)? because the Patriarchs considered the land as theirs from the moment that God verbally gave it to Abraham. 41 Once God promised it to the patriarchs they were sure that they would inherit it. Hence it was as good as already taken (Ralbag). God similarly gave it to Jacob, as we read, The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed (Gen. 28:13).

Chapter 49

Verse 1

THAT WHICH SHALL BEFALL YOU. Prophecies foretelling that which shall befall you in the future. Those who base themselves on Scripture's closing remark, and this is that their father spoke unto them and blessed them (v. 28), and conclude that they (Jacob's words) are blessings, err. 1 Since Scripture concludes with and this is that their father spoke unto them and blessed them (v. 28), it implies that what precedes are blessings. For if it were so, where are the blessings of Reuben, Simeon and Levi? 2 These three sons were castigated, not blessed. The way to understand and this is that their father spoke unto them and blessed them is as follows: and this (v. 3-27) is what their father spoke unto them by

way of prophecy after which he blessed them. Scripture omits the blessings.

Verse 2

Verse 3

REUBEN, THOU ART MY FIRST-BORN, MY MIGHT, AND THE FIRST-FRUITS OF MY STRENGTH. My might was first seen in thee. The first-born is called the first of one's strength. We find an identical expression in And smote all the first-born in Egypt, The first-fruits of their strength in the tents of Ham (Ps. 78:51).
THE EXCELLENCY OF DIGNITY. You were suited by virtue of being first-born for the advantage of being exalted above all your brothers. 3 I.E. translates yeter se'et (the excellency of dignity) as the advantage (yeter) of rank (se'et) and interprets accordingly. It should be noted that se'et comes from the root nun, sin, alef, meaning raised up or exalted.
AND THE EXCELLENCY OF POWER. This means the same as The excellency of dignity. It is prophetic style to repeat the same idea in different words. 4 I.E. translates our line: The advantage of rank / the advantage of power. The first in rank has dominion over those below him, hence power is parallel to rank and the advantage of power means the same as the advantage of rank. Modem scholars refer to this as synonymous parallelism. The latter is a feature of Biblical poetry. The meaning of oz is power.

Verse 4

UNSTABLE. Because you acted unstably as water does.
HAVE NOT THOU THE EXCELLENCY. (Some say) that al totar (have not thou the excellency) means, you will not have the advantage. 5 According to this interpretation our line reads: Unstable as water / you will not have the advantage; i.e., because you acted unstably as water does, you will not have the advantage of rank and power. However, if this were the case then our text should have read al tutar rather than al totar ; i.e., the vav of totar should have been vocalized with a shuruk. 6 Totar is vocalized with a cholam. If al totar means you will not have the advantage then totar is a passive, i.e., a hofal, and should be written tutar and not totar which is a hifil and a causative. Cf. Filwarg. Others say that our clause should be interpreted thus: you acted unstably as water that is poured out of a vessel and you gained nothing thereby (al totar). 7 The advantage of this interpretation is that totar is not irregularly vocalized. Al totar is a hifil imperfect with the meaning of a perfect It literally means you will not gain. Here it means you did not gain anything; that is, you gained nothing by acting rashly. For an alternate interpretation see Krinsky. However, I disagree with this interpretation. The term al is always used in Scripture as an imperative. 8 The point is al totar cannot be translated as you gained nothing because al is an imperative meaning don't This comment also negates the first interpretation quoted by I.E. since there, too, al is not used as an imperative (Filwarg). The latter fact is not negated by the fact that we find al used once in a non-imperative sense in In the way of righteousness is life, And in the pathway thereof there is no (al) death (Prov. 12:28). 9 I.E.'s point is that one irregular usage of al does not disprove his contention that al is always used as an imperative. The correct translation of our clause is: do not seek any advantage (al totar) even one as insignificant as water. 10 In other words al totar

means do not seek any advantage. This comment presents a problem. I.E. reads, "even one as insignificant as water (afilu pachaz ka-mayim)." This reading is extremely difficult since up to now I.E. explains pachaz ka-mayim as referring to Reuben's action, not to Reuben's punishment. Filwarg suggests deleting these words. Krinsky and Cherez emend afilu to attah (you). Weiser suggests that this comment has been misplaced and that its proper place is after Saadiah's comment. In this case I.E. amplifies Saadiah's explanation that pachaz means something insignificant. However, it appears that I.E. anticipated Saadiah's interpretation of pachaz ka-mayim. Accordingly the vav of totar is properly vocalized with a cholam, and it follows the paradigm of tosaf (more) in Think upon the battle, thou wilt do so no more (al tosaf) (Job 40:32). 11 Totar is a hifil and follows the paradigm of tosaf which is also a hifil. Since tosaf is a hifil the text should have read tosef. But as the word comes at the end of a verse the tzere changes to a pattach. Similarly totar should have been written toter but as it concludes a segment of a poetical line the tzere changes to a pattach. Cf. Rashi on Job 40:32 (Cherez). Thus totar is similar to tosaf. Rabbi Saadiah Gaon explains our line as follows: you will not have any advantage over your brothers even one as insignificant as water. According to Saadiah pachaz (unstable) comes from the same root as pochazim (light, insignificant) in vain and light (pochazim) fellows (Judges 9:4), and the root of the word pachaz does not have to be inverted. 12 As it must be if we interpret the word to mean unstable. Pachaz (unstable) comes from the root chet, peh, zayin (chafaz) which means to hurry. However, the root of pachaz is obviously peh, chet, zayin. By interpreting pachaz to mean unstable we are saying that we must invert the root chet, peh, zayin into peh, chet, zayin. However, according to Saadiah pachaz has its own root, peh, chet, zayin, and means light, insignificant.

THEN DEFILEDST THOU IT. From the day that thou defiled my couch, my conjugal couch was removed. 13 The part of the verse under discussion reads: Then defiledst thou / my couch went up. I.E. reads "my couch went up" as if written, my couch went up from me. He interprets it to mean, my couch was taken away from me. According to I.E., in Chapter 7 of his Yesod Mora, Jacob ceased cohabiting with his wives after Reuben defiled his couch. His reason was: Rachel was dead, Bilhah defiled, and he was angry at Leah because of what her son did and therefore slept neither with her nor her handmaiden Zilpah. "My couch went up" thus means, my conjugal bed ceased to function. Filwarg suggests that the reference may be only to Bilhah. Yetzu'i alah (he went up to my couch) is to be interpreted as if written yetzu'i alah me'alai (my conjugal couch went up from me). Furthermore, the word alah (went up) at times has the meaning of cut off, 14 In this case yetzu'i alah means my couch was cut off or destroyed. as in O my God, take me not away (al ta'aleni) in the midst of my days (Ps. 102:25). Our chapter is clearly explained in Chronicles where we read, Reuben (was) the first-born of Israel…but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's couch, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel, and he was not to be reckoned in the genealogy as first-born (I Chron. 5:1). Chronicles then tells us that Joseph received the birthright and Judah the kingship (Ibid. v. 2). Some explain that and he was not to be reckoned in the genealogy as first-born means that the listing of the order of the twelve sons would start with Reuben. 15 In other words, and he was not to be reckoned in the genealogy as first born refers to Joseph, not to Reuben.

Verse 5

SIMEON AND LEVI ARE BRETHREN. He referred to them as brethren because of what they did to the city of Shechem. 16 The point is all twelve sons were brethren, Why, then, does Jacob single out Simeon and Levi as

brethren? Scripture tells us that at Shechem two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi…took each man his sword, and came upon the city unawares, and slew all the males (Gen. 34:25). Simeon and Levi were thus brothers in council with regard to the destruction of Shechem (Weiser).
THEIR KINSHIP. Some say that the word mekherotehem (their kinship) is similar in meaning to ha-karat (the show of) in The show of (ha-karat) their countenance doth witness against them (Is. 3:9). 17 That is, one can tell by looking at them that they employ weapons of violence (Weiser). However, this interpretation is grammatically impossible. 18 Mekherotehem and ha-karat come from different roots (Weiser). Others say that mekherotehem is to be rendered their possessions 19 Our text is thus to be rendered: weapons of violence are their possessions. and is to be compared to the word tikhru (ye shall buy) in and ye shall also buy (tikhru) water of them for money (Deut. 2:6). However, this, too, is incorrect for the word tikhru means to dig. 20 Deut. 2:6 is thus to be rendered: ye shall dig water of them for money; that is, pay them so that they will give you permission to dig for water (Cherez). Others say that mekherotehem is related to the word mekhirah (sale) and the meaning of mekherotehem is they sold themselves, 21 That is, they sold themselves to weapons of destruction. as in a people that jeoparded (cheref) their lives unto the death (Jud. 5:18). 22 Cf. Kimchi in Jud. 5:18. Although different verbs are employed in our verse and in Jud. 5:18, the idea is the same. For an alternate interpretation see Krinsky. I believe that mekherotehem comes from the same root as mekhorotayich (thine origin) (Ezek. 16:3). 23 It means in the land of their origin. While the prepositional bet is missing from mekherotehem, 24 If mekherotehem means in their land wherein they dwelt, Scripture should have read bi-mekherotehem. we find the same with the word bet (house) in that was found in the house of (bet) 25 Scripture should have read be-vet rather than bet. We thus see that Scripture occasionally omits the prepositional bet. the Lord (II Kings 16:8) and with the word ma'on (habitation) in which I have commanded in My habitation (ma'on) (I Sam. 2:29). 26 Scripture should have read be-ma'on rather than ma'on. See above note. Our text refers to the violence which Simeon and Levi committed in the land of their origin by deceitfully slaying the entire city of Shechem after making a covenant with them. 27 Cf. Gen. 34. Weapons of violence their kinship should thus be rendered: they employed weapons of violence in the land of their origin.

Verse 6

LET MY SOUL NOT COME INTO THEIR COUNCIL. Rabbi Aaron 28 Gaon of the school of Pumbedita. The great Hai Gaon was among his students. explained the word tavo (come) in Let my soul not come (tavo) as having the meaning of set like the meaning of ba (goeth down, to set) in and the sun goeth down (ba) (Eccles. 1:5). 29 The word ba means to come. In Eccles. 1:5 the word ba means sets, i.e., when the sun goes down (sets) it is no longer in the sky. Similarly the word tavo, which comes from the same root, here means will set. Let my soul not set from their council means let my soul always be in their council. He interpreted let my soul not come into their council as meaning, I do not want to be outside of their council. However, Rabbi Aaron's interpretation inverts the meaning of the verse. 30 Rabbi Aaron interpreted Let my soul not come in to their council to mean let my soul not set from their council. The verse means I do not want my soul to be in their council. Thus Rabbi Aaron's interpretation is precisely the opposite of what the verse actually says. If Jacob praised Simeon and Levi, why did he mention weapons of violence? Furthermore, Jacob told his sons, Ye have troubled me, to make me odious unto the inhabitants of the land (Gen. 34:30). 31 We thus see that Jacob was angry at what his sons did to the inhabitants of Shechem and on his deathbed

would not praise them for this act. The truth of the matter is that Simeon and Levi placed Jacob and his household in great jeopardy by their actions in Shechem. Indeed, were it not for the terror of God that was upon the cities that were round about them (Gen. 35:5), they would have surrounded Jacob and his family and exterminated them all. He (Rabbi Aaron) similarly explained 32 That is, in a positive manner, not that Jacob castigated his sons but praised them for slaying the inhabitants of Shechem and destroying its wall. Rabbi Aaron interprets verses 6-7 as follows: Let my soul not set from their council, from their assembly let my glory not be excluded; For in their anger they slew men, and in their self-will they uprooted a cursed wall; For their anger was fierce, and their wrath it was cruel. Rabbi Aaron interprets verse 8 as follows: I will give them a good portion in Jacob (achallekem be-ya'akov) and may they multiply in Israel (va-afitzem bi'yisra'el) (Filwarg). Cursed be their anger (v. 7) as meaning and in their self will they uprooted a cursed wall, 33 Rabbi Aaron renders ikkeru shor (they houghed oxen) as they uprooted a wall. for their anger was fierce. The above explanations are unpalatable. 34 Literally, cold, i.e., unpalatable as cold food (Krinsky). Let my soul not come into their council. 35 I reject them. I.E. takes Jacob's words and gives them a new twist. Rabbi Moses Ha-Kohen 36 Rabbi Moses ben Samuel Gikatilla, an 11th century Bible commentator. See I.E. on Gen. 1:26 and the notes thereto. says that kevodi (my glory) is synonymous with nafshi (my soul). He notes that we find the two often used synonymously in the book of Psalms. Rabbi Moses' interpretation is correct since our text repeats itself in different words, 37 The point is that the second half of the line repeats what the first half said but in different words. In the first half it uses nafshi, in the second kevodi. However, both mean one and the same. as is the style of prophetic statements. We thus find, Ask thy father, and he will declare unto thee, Thine elders, and they will tell thee (Deut. 32:7), and (in Num. 23:8) How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? And how shall I execrate, whom the Lord hath not execrated? Thus into their council means the same as unto their assembly, come (tavoh) the same as be united (techad), and nafshi the same as kevodi. However, Rabbi Judah ben Balam the Spaniard 38 Bible commentator and grammarian who lived in the 10th and 11th centuries. "His commentaries (in Arabic) on most of the Bible are remarkable for their philosophical method and use of comparison with Arabic." (Cecil Roth, Standard Jewish Encyclopedia, p. 940). says that Rabbi Moses erred. He maintains that kavod (glory) refers to the body because the body is the glory (kavod) of the soul in the same way that a necklace is the ornament to the neck, 39 The body is inferior to the soul, yet it is considered the soul's glory in the same way that a necklace, although certainly less important than the neck, is nevertheless called the ornament of the neck (Cherez). as we find in the verse Who satisfieth thy body (edyekh) with good things (Ps. 103:5). 40 The Hebrew edyekh ordinarily means your ornament. J.P.S. translates it as thine old age. Rabbi Judah Balam interprets edyekh as referring to the body. However, I.E. in Psalms interprets edyekh as referring to the soul. Rabbi Judah offers as a proof text, 41 That kavod refers to the body. Yea, let him lay my glory (kevodi) in the dust. Selah. (Ps. 7:6). 42 Which proves that glory cannot refer to the soul for it is impossible to lay the soul in the dust. However, I say that Rabbi Judah errs, for we find Scripture saying, So that my glory (kevodi) may sing praise to Thee (Ps. 30:13), 43 I.E. interprets this verse in his commentaries on Psalms as follows: So that all that have a soul (kavod) may sing praise to thee. We thus see that kavod refers to the soul. Rabbi Judah might retort that Ps. 30:13 should be interpreted: so that my body may sing praise to thee, or all that have a human form (kavod) may sing praise to thee. and Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory (kevodi) rejoiceth; My flesh (i.e., my body) also dwelleth in safety (Ps. 16:9). 44 Kavod must refer

to the soul for otherwise body is mentioned twice in our verse. I.E. in Psalms interprets my heart as referring to man's intelligence, my glory (kevodi) to man's soul, and my flesh to the body. As to the proof which Rabbi Judah offered from Yea, let him lay my glory in the dust, it is figurative. What the verse means is that my soul will be lowered as low as possible, i.e., to the dust. Positive proof that my interpretation is correct comes from My soul (nafshi) cleaveth unto the dust (Ps. 119:25). 45 This verse certainly must be taken figuratively. Similarly, Ps. 119:25.

BE UNITED. Techad (be united) is related to the word yachad (united). 46 Its root is yod, chet, dalet. However, according to Rabbi Moses Ha-Kohen, the grammarian of blessed memory, the tzere beneath the tav of techad takes the place of the alef of echad. 47 That is, its root is alef, chet, dalet. He similarly explains the word tesham (be desolate) in and that the land be not desolate (tesham) (Gen. 47:19). 48 Rabbi Moses Ha-Kohen says that the root of tesham is alef, shin, mem and the tav is vocalized with a tzere to make up for the dropped alef. I.E. holds that it comes from the root yod, shin, mem. Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 47:19.

[INTO THEIR COUNCIL.] Be-sodam (into their council) is analogous to be-hivvasedam (while they took council) in while they took council (be-hivvasedam) together against me (Ps. 31:14). 49 Both words come from the root samekh, vav, dalet (Krinsky) and mean secret council. The meaning of our verse is: since Simeon and Levi's weapons are ones of violence (v. 5), Let my soul not come into their council.

THEY SLEW MEN. Scripture employs the term ish (man) generically as it does shor (ox) and chamor (ass) for oxen and asses (Gen. 32:6). They slew men alludes to the inhabitants of the city of Shechem.

OXEN. Shor (oxen) is to be rendered as wall. We similarly read, Its branches run over the wall (shur) (v. 22). I have already explained in my work Moznayim that the cholam and shuruk interchange. 50 Therefore the fact that our verse reads shor and verse 22 shur presents no problem.

[HOUGHED.] Ikkeru (houghed) is similar to the word te'akker (hough) in thou shalt hough (te'akker) their horses (Josh. 11:6). 51 According to I.E. ikkeru shor is to be translated, they uprooted a wall. This verse shows that Shechem was a large city since it had a wall.

Verse 7

CURSED BE THEIR ANGER, FOR IT WAS FIERCE. Jacob either prophesied or offered a prayer that Simeon and Levi's anger would (or should) diminish and that this would be for their very own good. For curse is the opposite of bless, and as a blessing means an increase, so a curse means a diminution. 52 Thus Cursed be their anger means may their anger be diminished or their anger will be diminished.

AND THEIR WRATH. A repetition in different words of their anger. The same is true with I will divide them and And scatter them. The meaning of I will divide them in Jacob, And scatter them in Israel is, Simeon and Levi deserve to be separated and disunited. And so it was. For we find that the lot of the tribe of Simeon fell within the inheritance of the tribe of Judah. 53 Cf. Josh. 19:1. Simeon was thus under Judah's dominion. Furthermore, its cities were discontiguous and scattered throughout the boundary of Judah. 54 In addition to having their inheritance within the tribe of Judah, their cities were also scattered within Judah's boundaries (Weiser). Similarly the forty-eight cities of the tribe of Levi were scattered among the other tribes.

Verse 8

JUDAH. Thou art as thy name, 55 That is, thy name Judah means praise. and thy brethren shall so praise thee. 56 The verse literally reads: Judah

thou, thy brethren shall praise thee. I.E interprets thus: Judah thou art as thy name and thy brethren shall so praise thee. When thy brothers shall see that Thy hand shall be on the neck of thine enemies; Thy father's sons shall bow down before thee as to a king. This prophecy came to pass.

Verse 9

JUDAH IS A LION'S WHELP. Jacob compared Judah to a small lion's whelp, to a type of whelp that grows into a lion. 57 The Hebrew reads, gur aryeh. Gur (whelp) can be applied to any young animal. I.E. points out that gur (whelp) aryeh (lion) means a gur that grows up to be a lion, that is, a gur of the lion family (Cherez). The comparative caf (meaning like) has been omitted, 58 Scripture reads: Judah is a lion's whelp. It should have read: Judah is as a lion's whelp (ke-gur). as it is in When a wild ass's colt (ayir pere) is born a man (Job. 11:12). 59 There, too, a caf should have been placed before ayir pere (a wild ass's colt). We thus see that Scripture occasionally omits the comparative caf. However, it should be supplied by the reader.
FROM THE PREY, MY SON, THOU ART GONE UP. My son, you appear to me as a lion's whelp when thou art gone up from the prey. From the prey means after tearing a prey apart. 60 According to Weiser. This is its plain meaning. For us to interpret it as referring to the saving of Joseph, 61 That it means: from the prey you brought up (saved) my son (Joseph). So Cherez. Judah saved Joseph by saying, What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood (Gen. 37:26). Scripture should have written he'elita (thou brought up) 62 The hifil. rather than alita (thou art come up) which is an intransitive verb. The rest of the verse 63 Which reads, He stooped down, he couched as a lion, etc. (Cherez). According to Krinsky and Weiser: the next verse, which reads, The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, is proof that our verse deals with Judah's ability as a warrior and not with his saving Joseph. I.E. literally reads: "The following verse is proof." Filwarg suggests that the word "following" is a scribal error. is proof that the first part of the verse deals with Judah's tearing of a prey and not with Judah's saving of Joseph from being a prey. Observe the verse And she brought up (va-ta'al) one of her whelps (Ezek. 19:3). 64 And you will see that when Scripture wants to say brought up, it employs the hifil va-ta'al. Cf. Kimchi on Ezek. 19:3. Also see Cherez.
[HE STOOPED DOWN, HE COUCHED AS A LION.] After a lion tears its prey it sits on its knees and couches in security and no other passing animal 65 The lion is not afraid of any other species of animal. will cause it to get up and flee.

Verse 10

THE SCEPTRE SHALL NOT DEPART FROM JUDAH. The sceptre of greatness shall not depart from Judah until David, who inaugurated the Kingdom of Judah, comes. 66 The verse reads, The scepter shall not depart from Judah…as long as men come to Shiloh The last part of the latter quote literally reads, until Shiloh cometh. I.E. interprets shiloh as referring to David, hence his interpretation: the scepter shall not depart from Judah…until David comes. Later in his commentary I.E. explains why Shiloh refers to David. And so it was. Observe that in Israel's march toward the promised land, the standard of the tribe of Judah set forth in the first (Num. 10:14). 67 We thus see that the tribe of Judah was pre-eminent. God also said, Judah shall go up first (Jud. 1:1, 2). 68 After the death of Joshua,…the children of Israel asked of the Lord saying: Who shall go up for us to fight against the Canaanites, to fight against them? And the Lord said: Judah shall go up (Jud. 1:1, 2). I.E. reads, "Judah shall go

up first." Either I.E. quoted from memory and erred or he amplified the Biblical verse. According to Krinsky the reference is to Jud. 20:18. There we read, with regard to the war against Benjamin, that Israel asked of the Lord, "Who shall go up to fight Benjamin first?" Scripture tells us, And the Lord said: Judah first. According to Krinsky, I.E. combined Jud. 1:2 and 2:18.
[NOR THE RULER'S STAFF.] A scribe (mechokek) who will write (she-yachok) in a book. 69 I.E. renders mechokek (ruler's staff) as scribe. The root chet, kof, kof means to inscribe. Cf. Is. 30:8, And inscribe (chukkah) it in a book. Thus mechokek is an inscriber, i.e., a scribe.
[FROM BETWEEN HIS FEET.] Scribes sit at the feet of the ruler. 70 According to Cohen.
SHILOH. Some interpret Shiloh as Onkelos does. They say that it means "his." 71 Onkelos renders ad ki yavo shiloh (literally, until shiloh cometh) as until the Messiah, to whom is the kingdom (shiloh meaning shelo, his) cometh. I.E. says that it is possible to so interpret the verse but to apply it to David rather than to the Messiah (Filwarg). Others say that Shiloh comes from the same root as u-ve-shilyatah (and against her afterbirth) (Deut. 28:57). 72 That is, it means a child. Shilyah means the afterbirth, or placenta and, by extension, the child which was in the placenta. The meaning of ad ki yavo shiloh thus is: until the child comes, the reference being until David from the house of Judah comes (Filwarg). Krinsky and Weiser apply it to the Messiah. Filwarg's interpretation seems to be correct in view of the fact that I.E. explicitly states that this verse applies to David. Others connect it to the Rabbinic term shalil (embryo). 73 The interpretation being the same as in the note above. There is also a commentator who says that shiloh refers to the city Shilo. He would explain yavo to mean goeth down, as in and the sun goeth down (ba) (Eccles. 1:5). 74 See note 29. And ad ki yavo shilo means until Shilo goeth down (is destroyed). Or he would maintain that our verse is abridged and should read as if written ad ki yavo ketz shilo (until the end of Shiloh comes). 75 Cohen. That is, Judah's pre-eminence will continue throughout the period of Shiloh and when that is destroyed, it will be superseded by the royal line of David. For it is written, And he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh (Ps. 78:60), and then, He chose David also His servant (Ps. 78:70). The latter interpretation is also not implausible. It is also possible that Shiloh means his son, with the heh taking the place of the vav, 76 If shiloh means his son, then the word should end in a vav rather than in a heh, as the vav with a cholem suffixed to a noun is the sign of the pronoun his. I.E. here accepts the interpretation that shiloh means his son. However, he connects it to the words tashleh rather than to shelil or shilyah as was done above (Filwarg). as in the word oholoh (his tent) (Gen. 9:21), and that the word shiloh comes from the same root as tashleh (give birth) in lo tashleh oti (don't cause me to give birth) (II Kings 4:28). 77 Don't pray to God that I should give birth (Weiser, Cherez).
[OBEDIENCE.] The word yikkehat (obedience of) is similar to the word li-kehat in to obey (li-kehat) his mother (Prov. 30:17). 78 They both come from the root kof, heh, tov meaning obedience. The yod of yikkehat is a third person imperfect prefix. 79 A yod prefixed to a verb is the sign of the third person future. The meaning of ve-lo yikkehat ammim is that nations shall obey him. Jacob's prophecy came true, for we find that many nations were subservient to David and his son Solomon. Our phrase (v. 10) does not mean that the sceptre shall depart from Judah when David comes. 80 According to I.E. our verse reads: the scepter shall not depart from Judah…until his son (David) comes. This implies that when David comes, the scepter shall depart from Judah. Our verse may be compared to someone saying, so and so will not lack bread until the time that he will have many vineyards and fields. For I will not leave thee, until I have done

that which I have spoken to thee of, viz., returning you to the land of Canaan (Gen. 28:15), is identical. 81 Krinsky, Weiser.

Verse 11

BINDING. The yod of oseri (binding) is superfluous. 82 The usual form is oser. It is similar to the superflous yods of ha-yoshevi (that are enthroned) (Ps. 123:1) 83 The usual form is ha-yoshev. and le-susati (to a steed) (Cant. 1:9) 84 The usual form is le-susah. both of which are superfluous.
HIS FOAL. Iroh (his foal) is similar to ayarim (ass colts) in on thirty ass colts (ayarim) (Jud. 10:4). 85 The singular is ayir and it means a young and vigorous male ass. The heh of iroh is in place of a vav as is indicated by the keri (Krinsky).
The yod of beni (colt) in beni atono (his ass's colt) is superfluous. 86 Beni atono is a variation of ben atono. Beni thus does not mean my son. The meaning of our verse then is: Binding his foal unto the vine and binding his ass's colt unto the choice vine, for the word binding is to be read as if written twice. 87 The text has "binding" once. I.E. notes that it applies both to his foal and to his ass's colt. This translation follows Vat. Ebr. 38 which reads, " ve-yehi perusho oseri la-gefen…ki…, and its meaning is: Binding his foal…because oseri is to be read as if written twice." The printed text reads, " o yehiyeh pirusho ki …or its meaning is because oseri is to be read as if written twice." This reading is impossible. It implies that according to the first interpretation (that the yod of oseri is superfluous) oseri does not apply to the second part of the verse. However, according to the first interpretation oseri also refers to the second part of the verse as well, for how else can we interpret And his ass's colt unto the choice vine, except by: And binding his ass's colt unto the choice vine. Both Filwarg and Cherez note that I.E.'s comment as written in the printed text is incomprehensible. They suggest their own emendation. However, the reading in Vat. Ebr. 38 eliminates most of the difficulties. The reading in the printed texts probably arose because a scribe omitted Binding his foal, etc., and a latter scribe changed ve-yehiyeh to o yehiyeh in an attempt to make sense out of the remaining fragment. However, he failed to do so.
UNTO THE CHOICE VINE. Scripture repeats the same idea in different words, for sorekah (vine) means the same as gefen, and ayir (foal) the same as aton.
Similarly, And his vesture in the blood of grapes. 88 Which means the same as his garments in wine. Some say that suto (his vesture) is the word kesuto (his vesture) with the kaf missing. 89 Thus sutoh comes from the root caf, samekh, heh which gives us the noun kesut (a covering, a vesture) (Cherez). However, I believe that sutoh comes from the same root as masveh (veil) (Ex. 34:33). 90 In this case the root of sutoh is samekh, vav, heh. Both opinions agree that sutoh means a vesture. They differ only in explaining the word's origin. The meaning of our verse is that his vineyards will produce so many grapes that Judah will bind 91 Reading ye'esor as in Vat. Ebr. 38. his foal to the vine and he will not care if the animal eats of the grapes; and he will have so much wine that he will wash his garments in wine rather than in water. Scripture terms wine the blood of grapes because wine is red. 92 Cf. Prov. 23:31, Look not thou upon the wine when it is red. The Bible speaks figuratively here, as it does in And it shall come to pass in that day, That the mountains shall drop down sweet wine, And the hills shall flow with milk (Joel 4:18). The land will produce so much wine that Judah will be called "red eyes" because of the great amount of wine that he will drink. 93 The verse literally reads: red eyes from wine. I.E. interprets accordingly. He will be so called because the eyes of one who drinks much wine look red. 94 Cf. Prov. 23:29, 30, Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry

long at the wine. Similarly Judah's teeth will be white from the large amount of milk that he will drink. 95 So Vat. Ebr. 38. The printed texts have "from eating milk." But milk is drunk not eaten. The verse literally reads: and his teeth white from milk. I.E. interprets accordingly.

Verse 12

AND HIS TEETH WHITE. U-leven (white) is an adjective modifying shinnayim (teeth). 96 I.E.'s point is that u-leven shinnayim means white teeth not whiteness of teeth; hence he points out that u-leven is an adjective (Filwarg). Shinnayim is in the dual form because the teeth are arranged in two sets. 97 The dual form is usually limited to nouns that come in pairs, i.e., oznayim (ears), yadayim (hands). However, there is more than one tooth in the mouth. Hence the plural of shen (tooth) should not be in the dual form. I.E. thus explains that shinayyim is in the dual form because teeth come in two sets, an upper and a lower. Saadiah Gaon, of blessed memory, explains His eyes shall based with wine to mean that his eyes shall be redder than wine. He similarly explains And his teeth white with milk to mean that his teeth shall be whiter than milk. 98 The Hebrew reads mi-yayin (with wine), and me-chalav (with milk). The mem can have the meaning more than. Thus mi-yayin can mean more than wine, and me-chalav, more than milk. Others say that And his teeth white with milk means that he will not eat an unclean thing and will not follow what his eyes see. 99 According to Krinsky the reference is to an oath that Judah took to be especially scrupulous in what he would eat and what he would look upon (women). Judah considered certain permitted foods as "unclean" and abstained from them. Judah took his oath of superpiety after the incident of Tamar (Gen. 39) as a form of penance and to ensure that henceforth he would act more saintly. The latter is a ridiculous homily. 100 It implies that the other brothers were not as saintly as Judah in that they did not take the same oath that Judah did (Krinsky). Or this interpretation is extremely far fetched because there is no allusion to it in the text.
Jacob at first enumerated the tribes 101 Jacob in prophesying about his children first prophesied about the sons of Leah, then about the sons of the handmaids, and finally concerning the sons of Rachel. In prophesying about the sons of Leah, Jacob followed the order of their birth. However, in prophesying concerning the sons of the handmaidens he did not follow the order of their birth. That is what I.E. means by Jacob at first listed the tribes in order of their birth. in the order of their birth. However, he listed Zebulun before Issachar because Issachar's inheritance fell between Zebulun and Dan. 102 Hence Issachar is listed between Zebulun and Dan. Cf. Josh. 19.

Verse 13

AT THE SHORE OF THE SEA. This, too, is proof that Jacob prophesied. 103 This verse is obviously a prophecy that Zebulun would inherit a portion which borders on the sea shore in the land of Israel. This supports I.E.'s contention that Jacob's final words to his children recorded in Chap. 49 are prophesies. Cf. I.E.'s comments on verse 1. The meaning of le-chof (at the shore) is, at the border of. It comes from the same root as chofef (covereth) in He covereth (chofef) him all the day (Deut. 33:12). The border of the sea is called chof because it "covers" the boats as boats cannot be anchored in places that are open to the wind. 104 Thus the border or shore (chof) protects or covers (chofef) the ships. Weiser suggests that what I.E. means by border is an inlet where the ships are anchored for protection.
AND HIS FLANK SHALL BE UPON ZIDON. His flank shall extend to Zidon. 105 His border shall extend to Zidon (Weiser)

Verse 14

ISSACHAR IS A LARGE-BONED ASS. Jacob compared Issachar to an ass whose bones are heavy. 106 That is, strong (Krinsky). Chamor (ass) is in the construct with garem (bones). 107 Chamor garem thus means an ass (chamor) of heavy bones (garem), rather than a heavy-boned ass. I.E.'s point is that garem is not an adjective modifying chamor (Filwarg, Weiser). Due to the heaviness of his bones, he is wont to couch. 108 According to Filwarg. The point is that this type of beast carries heavy loads and therefore often couches down to rest when burdened. It should be noted that I.E. is vague and that Weiser, Cherez and Krinsky offer other interpretations.
BETWEEN THE SHEEPFOLDS. Ben ha-mishpatayim (between the sheepfolds) means between the arranged rows. 109 I.E. does not tell us what he means by "arranged rows." The reference may be to the burdens borne by the ass which are arranged in two rows, one on the right side of the animal and one on the left (Krinsky), or to the rows of the sheep-folds (Weiser). It is possible that mishpatayim comes from the same root as tishpot (arrange) in Lord, Thou wilt arrange (tishpot) peace for us (Is. 26:12).

Verse 15

FOR HE SAW A RESTING-PLACE THAT IT WAS GOOD. When Issachar saw that his land and resting-place were pleasant, he, as an ass, bowed his shoulder to bear any and all burdens and became as a servant that pays levies. Scripture says this concerning Issachar because this tribe did not consist of warriors and its men did not want to leave their homes to go to war. Moses similarly said concerning Issachar, Rejoice…Issachar, in thy tents (Deut. 33:18). The levy mentioned in our verse may refer to Issachar's payment of a money levy to the king in Israel in lieu of furnishing soldiers for his army, or it may refer to a payment of money to foreign nations that they should not attack them. 110 Vat. Ebr. 38 reads, "or to foreign nations who attacked them." The point is that the tribe of Issachar were as servants (mas oved) because they paid a levy either to the king of Israel or to foreign nations.

Verse 16

DAN SHALL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE. Jacob hinted that Dan, although born of a handmaid, would have a standard just as the tribes born of the wives did. 111 For the standards see Num. 2. The four tribes with standards were: Reuben, Judah, Ephraim and Dan. The first three were descended from Jacob's wives, Dan was the son of Bilhah, Rachael's handmaid. Dan was thus a ruler over all the other tribes that were descended from the handmaids. 112 This explains Dan shall judge his people, i.e., he shall be a ruler over the tribes descended from the handmaids.

Verse 17

[A SERPENT.] Jacob compared Dan in his strength to a serpent. 113 Scripture says that Dan shall be a serpent in the way. I.E. points out that Jacob compared Dan to a serpent only with regard to his ability to harm his enemies. It is also possible that shefifon (a horned snake) comes from the same root as yeshufekha (they shall bruise thy) in they shall bruise thy (yeshufekha) head (Gen. 3:15). 114 Hence shefifon means a snake. It is so called because it bruises (Krinsky). According to this interpretation shefifon ale orach (a horned snake in the path) means the same as nachash ale derech (a serpent in the way).

Verse 18

[I WAIT FOR THY SALVATION, O LORD.] When the serpent bites the horse's heel, it is afraid that the rider will smash its head with his sword. Hence the prophet prayed, I wait for Thy salvation, O Lord. 115 When the serpent strikes (that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider falleth backward), he is not out of danger. The rider can still kill him. Hence Jacob prayed that God be with Dan so that when he struck his enemy he would escape safely. The "thy" of Thy salvation refers to Dan. 116 The caf of li-shu'atekha (for thy salvation) does not refer to God but to Dan. I.E. interprets thus because he believes our verse to be a prayer to God on behalf of Dan. The meaning of our verse is: I trust to God for thy salvation. It is also possible that Scripture employs a noun (salvation) in place of an infinitive. 117 I.E. interprets li-shu'atekha (for thy salvation) as if written le-hoshi'akha. The latter is a verb, the former a noun. Our verse should thus be rendered: I trust that God will save thee. Thy salvation in We will shout for joy in thy salvation (Ps. 20:6) is similar. 118 Here, too, the "thy" in thy salvation does not refer to God. The aforementioned is the case whether the "thy" of thy salvation (Ps. 20:6) refers to King David or to the anointed, his son. 119 The Messiah (Cherez). Any of the Judean kings descended from David (Weiser). The point is that the caf suffixed to yeshu'ah (salvation or victory) does not refer to God. The same holds true in our verse (Filwarg, Cherez). Vat. Ebr. 38 reads, "Thy salvation (thy victory) is similar in that "thy" refers either to David or to the anointed his son." Rabbi Samuel Ha-Nagid says that the word va-yomer has been omitted from our clause and it should be read as if written: and he will say (va-yomer), I wait for Thy salvation, O Lord. 120 The subject of va-yomer is Dan, i.e., Dan after biting the horse's heel will say, I wait for Thy salvation, O Lord (Filwarg). According to this interpretation "thy" in Thy salvation refers to God. Rabbi Isaac 121 According to Weiser, the reference is to Rabbi Isaac, one of the early Gaonim of Sura. explains our verse as follows: when the prophet Jacob prophetically saw his son Dan in the form of a serpent, he was overtaken by fright and exclaimed, "Save me, O Lord." 122 "Save me, O Lord" is a paraphrase of, I wait for Thy salvation, O Lord. According to this interpretation also, "thy" in Thy salvation refers to God. The reason for Jacob's fright was explained by I.E. at the beginning of his comment.

Verse 19

GAD. Jacob prophesied that a troop (an army) would attack Gad but that he would ultimately be victorious. 123 This is the meaning of But he shall troop upon their heel, heel meaning in the end. Cf. I.E.'s comments on Gen. 3:15.
SHALL TROOP UPON HIM. Yegudennu (shall troop upon him) is similar to yegudennu (he invadeth) in the people that he invadeth (yegudennu) (Hab. 3:16). 124 Hence Gad gedud yegudennu (Gad, a troop shall troop upon him) means, Gad, a troop shall invade or attack him. Yagud (he shall troop), like gedud (a troop), comes from the root gimel, dalet, dalet. 125 I. E.'s point is that gedud (a troop), yegudennu (shall troop upon him) and yagud (he shall troop) all come from the same double root, gimel, dalet, dalet. That gedud comes from this root is obvious. That yagud and yegudennu (yagud plus the suffix nu) come from this root is not as apparent. Double root letters are vocalized with a cholam and ayin vav roots with a shuruk in the kal imperfect. It thus appears that yagud and yegudennu come from the root gimel, vav, dalet, hence I.E.'s comment. It is vocalized with a shuruk in place of a cholam like the word yarun (doth sing) in But the righteous doth sing (yarun) and rejoice (Prov. 29:6). 126 Yarun comes from the root resh, nun, nun, so it should have been

vocalized yaron. We thus see that at times a double root is vocalized as an ayin vav (Cherez). We do not know exactly to what incident Jacob was referring because we don't know all the tribulations that our ancestors endured. 127 Cherez. We do not know when the tribe of Gad was attacked by an invading army.

Verse 20

AS FOR ASHER. Some say that the mem of me-asher (as for Asher) is superfluous. 128 None of the other tribes have a mem prefixed to their names (Weiser). Our verse should thus be translated: Asher, his bread shall be fat. However, I believe that what our clause means is: from the land of Asher "fat bread" will come. 129 Or fat food, following Vat. Ebr. 38 which reads lechem shamen. Our texts have lechem va-shemen (bread and oil). However, this reading is incorrect in view of I.E.'s interpretation of shemenah as being an adjective of lechem. See next note. According to this interpretation the mem prefixed to Asher is a preposition meaning from. Bread in our verse is in the feminine. 130 The text reads, shemenah lachmo (his bread shall be fat). Shemenah is a feminine, the masculine being shamen. In other places lechem is in the masculine, i.e., Num. 4:7; I Sam. 9:7. We find the same to be the case with the words house, 131 Bayit (house) is masculine in Deut. 22:8 and feminine in II Kings 15:5. place, 132 Makom (place) is masculine in Gen. 1:9 and feminine in Job 20:9. hand, 133 Yad (hand) is masculine in Ezek. 2:9 and feminine in Ex. 14:31. Yad is generally feminine. fire, 134 Esh (fire) is masculine in Ps. 104:4 and feminine in Num. 16:35. eye, 135 Ayin (eye) is masculine in Prov. 4:25 and feminine in Gen. 3:7. Ayin is generally feminine. wind, 136 Ru'ach (wind) is masculine in Job 1:19 and feminine in Gen. 1:2. land, 137 Eretz is masculine in Is. 9:18 and feminine in Gen. 1:2. Eretz is generally feminine. chest 138 Aron (chest) is masculine in Num. 10:33 and feminine in I Sam. 4:17. It is generally masculine. and people. 139 Am (people) is masculine in Gen. 11:6 and feminine in Ex. 5:16. Am is usually masculine.
[ROYAL DAINTIES.] The meaning of ma'adanne melekh (royal dainties) is known. 140 The meaning of ve-hu yitten ma'adanne melekh (and he shall yield royal dainties) is that Asher will provide kings with food for their enjoyment. He will do so because his land is very fertile and produces the choicest foods (Cherez). Moses similarly said concerning Asher, And let him dip his foot in oil (Deut. 33:24). 141 Moses similarly said that Asher's land would be fertile, for the aforementioned is the meaning of Moses' blessing (Deut. 33:24).

Verse 21

NAPHTALI IS A HIND LET LOOSE. The word sheluchah (let loose) means a gift, 142 I Kings 9:16, and given it for a portion (shilluchim) unto his daughter. The meaning of Naphtali is a hind let loose thus is: Naphtali is as beloved and as beautiful as a hind given as a gift (Weiser). Filwarg suggests rendering: Naphtali has a land which is as precious as a hind given as a gift. and the one who receives such a gift responds with goodly words. 143 He giveth cannot refer to ayyalah (hind) which is feminine. Hence it must refer to the one receiving the gift. Others say that hind refers to Deborah and that He giveth goodly words alludes to Barak who joined her in a song to God. 144 Cf. Jud. 5:1. Scripture mentions Naphtali 145 Scripture tells us that Deborah sat…in the hill country of Ephraim (Jud. 4:5). The latter indicates that Deborah was not a Naphtalite. The question arises, "If Deborah was not a Naphtalite why mention her in a prophecy which pertains to Naphtali?" I.E. answers that Barak, the general whom Deborah inspired to lead Israel to victory and who joined her in song to God, came from the tribe of Naphtali. Cf. Jud.

4:6, Barak…out of Kedesh-naphtali. because Barak came from the tribe of Naphtali. 146 Filwarg suggests rendering, "Scripture mentions Naphtali because the battle in which Deborah and Barak played a key role took place in the territory of Naphtali." The literal reading of I.E. is, Scripture mentions Naphtali because of his inheritance.

Verse 22

JOSEPH IS A FRUITFUL VINE. Ben means a branch 147 Ben means a son. Metaphorically speaking, the branch is the son of the tree. Hence ben can also mean a branch (Cherez). and it is a feminine noun. 148 Ben is usually masculine. However, porat is feminine. Thus ben in ben porat yosef (Joseph is a fruitful branch) has to be feminine. If ben was masculine our phrase would read ben poreh yosef. Ben in And the branch (ben) that Thou madest strong for Thyself (Ps. 80:16) has a similar meaning. Grammatically speaking porat (fruitful) is a po'elet. A feminine singular participle can come in two paradigms, 149 The two paradigms being po'alah and po'elet, examples of which are oyevah and oyevet. A more common example would be kotevah and kotevet, or shomerah and shomeret. The translation follows Vat. Ebr. 38. Our texts have oyeveha and oyavti. The latter appears to be a scribal error (Weiser, Krinsky, Cherez). viz., oyevah and oyevet, and similarly porah and porat. 150 Porah is a po'alah and porat is a po'elet. The word porat is related to the word poriyyah (fruitful) (Ps. 128:3). There is a commentator who connects porat to the word porot (branches) in And brought forth branches (porot) (Ezek. 17:6). 151 In this case ben means a plant and porat a branch. According to this interpretation ben porat yosef means Joseph is a plant containing branches (Krinsky). The Bible repeats the phrase ben porot twice in succession, for that is Hebrew style. Compare, For, lo, Thine enemies, O Lord, For, lo, Thine enemies shall perish (Ps. 92:10). The repetition of a phrase indicates permanence. According to the second quoted interpretation 152 That porat is related to porot (in Ezek. 17:6) a tav has been substituted for a heh 153 In the word porat. If porat means a branch then our verse should have read ben porah, since porah is the singular of porot (branches). Thus porat is a variation of porah. as in the case of the tav of ve-shavat (then it shall return) in then it shall return (ve-shavat) to the prince (Ezek. 46:17). 154 The verse should have read ve-shavah instead of ve-shavat. Thus we see that a tav has been substituted for a heh.
[ITS BRANCHES RUN OVER THE WALL.] Joseph was as a fruitful vine. He gave birth to branches, each one of which ran over the wall; i.e., the branches were so tall that they ran over fortified walls. 155 I.E. explains shur (wall) to mean a wall which serves a defensive purpose (Krinsky). Such walls are high and strong. I.E. is saying that the branches grew very high (Cohen) or that the branches were so tall that they needed a mighty wall to support them (Krinsky). Scripture here combines banot (branches) with tza'adah (run) 156 Banot is a noun in the plural, while tza'adah is a verb in the singular. If consistent, the text should read, banot tza'adu. I.E. explains that the combination of plural and singular means each one of the branches will run over the wall. in a manner similar to Dead flies (zevuve) make the ointment of the perfumer fetid (yavish) (Eccles. 10:1). 157 Wherein zevuve is in the plural and yavish is in the singular. The meaning of this verse is that each one of the dead flies makes the ointment of the perfumer fetid. Cf. I.E.'s comments on Eccles. 10:1.

Verse 23

HAVE DEALT BITTERLY WITH HIM. Rabbi Samuel Ha-Nagid explains this verse as meaning: they set his gall for a target (va-yemareruhu) 158 Mererah

means gall, hence Rabbi Samuel Ha-Nagid's interpretation. and then the archers shot at him (va-robbu). 159 Reading yaru, as in Vat. Ebr. 38. The word rabbim (archers) in Call together the archers (rabbim) against Babylon, All them that bend the bow (Jer. 50:29) is similar to va-robbu in our verse. 160 We thus see that the word rabbim means archers. Va-robbu is its verbal form. The root of the word is resh, bet, bet. His archers compass me round about…He poureth out my gall upon the ground (Job 16:13) is similar to our verse. 161 In that it speaks of the gall as a target for archers (Cherez).
AND HATED HIM. First they hated him and then they set up his gall as a target. We must thus explain va-yistemuhu to mean, and they had hated him. 162 Va-yistemuhu (and hated him) follows va-robbu (and they shot at him).
Logically, va-yistemuhu should come first, i.e., the sequence should be they hated him, they set his gall as a target, and they shot at thim. Hence va-yistemuhu should be taken as a pluperfect (Weiser). This 163 The archers who hated and shot at Joseph. alludes to Joseph's brothers who sold him into slavery.

Verse 24

BUT HIS BOW ABODE FIRM. His bow abode in a firm place. 164 Be-etan literally means in firm, which is short for be-makom etan (in a firm place) (Weiser).
WERE MADE SUPPLE. Va-yafozzu means, and they strengthened themselves. I believe that va-yafozzu comes from the same root as mefazzez (leaping) (II Sam. 6:16). 165 One who leaps gathers up strength (Filwarg). One who leaps strengthens (tightens) his girdle (Cherez quoting Kimchi). There are those who connect va-yafozzu to the word paz (pure gold). 166 They explain va-yafozzu zero'e yadav (and the arms of his hand were made supple) to mean, and the arms of his hand were gilded, an allusion to the golden ring Pharaoh gave him. Cf. Rashi. However, their interpretation makes no sense.
The meaning of our text (v. 23 and 24) is that the archers hated Joseph and gathered together to spill his gall. However, his adversaries were afraid of him because his bow and hands were strong. They therefore could not overcome him.
BY THE HANDS OF THE MIGHTY ONE OF JACOB. FROM THENCE. The Mighty One of Jacob alludes to the Lord. From the power that Joseph received from the Mighty One of Jacob he was able to become, and indeed became, "the shepherd of the stone of Israel." 167 The Stone of Israel refers to the children of Israel (Cherez). And so it was, for we read, And Joseph sustained his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread (Gen. 47:12). Jacob employed the term Mighty One of Jacob for God 168 Jacob could have employed the term, the Mighty One of Abraham or the Mighty One of Isaac (Krinsky). because God knew of his deep love for Joseph. 169 Joseph became "the shepherd of Israel" because of Jacob's merit. God chose Joseph for this great honor and thereby elevated him above all his brothers because the Lord knew Jacob's love for Joseph. Hence By the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob etc. means: you became the shepherd of the stone (children) of Israel from the power that came to you from the God who knew of my deep love for you.
The meaning of stone is the very thing. 170 Stone represents essence, the very thing. The reference is to Jacob and his family. Cf. Rashi. Some say 171 The reference is to Rabbi Isaac ibn Giat (Weiser, Cherez). that mi-sham (from thence) should be interpreted from that time. However, we never find the word sham (there) to have this meaning anywhere in Scripture. This commentator also interprets the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel as meaning: the one whose heart died and was as stone, 172 The reference is to Jacob whose heart died within him when he was told that

Joseph was alive (Gen. 45:26,27). In I Sam. 25:37 such an experience is described as the heart turning to stone (Weiser, Cherez). According to Krinsky the reference is to Jacob and his family who would have died (their hearts would have turned to stone) had Joseph not fed them. but who revived to feed (ro'eh), i.e., to live by eating. However, this interpretation is farfetched.

Verse 25

EVEN BY THE GOD OF THY FATHER. I believe that this verse is connected to the preceding one. 173 Even by God literally reads, from the God (me'el). This term presents a problem. What came from God? I.E.'s answer is that from God refers to Joseph's power which is referred to in the previous verse. Its meaning is: the power which you possess came to you from the God of thy father, who shall help thee. The mem of me-el (even by God) is also to be prefixed to ve-et (and by). 174 That is, ve-et is to be read as if written u-me-et (and from by). The mem of me-el is like the bet of be-el (as God) (Ex. 6:3) which is also to be prefixed to u-ve-shemi (but by my name). 175 Our text is thus to be read as if written: From the God of thy father who shall help thee, and from the Almighty who shall bless thee. Ex. 6:3 literally reads: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty (be-el shaddai) but my name (u-shemi) YHVH I made Me not known to them. According to I.E. we should read the aforementioned as if written: and I appeared…as God Almighty (be-el shaddai) but with My name (u-ve-shemi) YHVH I made Me not known to them. Thus And from the Almighty, who shall bless thee repeats the idea contained in From the God of thy father, who shall help thee. Saadiah Gaon explains the phrase me-el avikha to mean, I will ask of the God of thy fathers. 176 Saadiah, too, was bothered by the term from the God. He explained from the God not as connected to the previous verse, but as a new thought; viz., I will ask of the God of thy fathers that he help thee and of the Almighty that he bless thee (Cherez). It is possible that With blessings of heaven above is connected to, From the God of thy father. 177 This interpretation, like the previous one, deals with the problem of verse 25 opening with the words From the God. It similarly rejects the notion that verse 25 is connected to verse 24. It, too, sees in verse 25 a new thought. It explains From the God as relating to the blessings mentioned in the second half of the verse, which shall come to you from the God of thy father. The meaning of our text is explained by They (the blessings) shall be on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the prince among his brethren (v. 26). 178 Verse 26 seems to conclude the blessing started in verse 25. The sequence thus appears to be: From God shall come to you blessings of the heavens above, of the deep that coucheth beneath, blessings of the breasts and womb. The aforementioned blessings shall be added to my mighty blessings and to the blessings of my progenitors and shall be on the head of Joseph and on the crown of the head of the prince among his brethren (Krinsky).

BLESSSINGS OF THE DEEP. Moses similarly said, And for the precious things of the earth and the fullness thereof (Deut. 33:13). 179 So Cherez. The point is that the blessing of the deep means that the land will be well watered and fertile, as Moses blessed the tribe of Joseph with a fertile land. Krinsky suggests that our text is corrupt and that the proof text should read: For the precious things of heaven, for the dew, And for the deep that coucheth beneath (Deut. 33:13). In this case I.E. is pointing out that Jacob and Moses' blessings are identical. The word tehom (the deep) is feminine both in our verse and in Deut. (33:16). It is similarly feminine in The deep (tehom) made it to grow (Ezek. 31:4). 180 Our verse reads, tehom rovetzet (the deep that coucheth). Deut. 33:13 reads, u-mi-tehom rovetzet (and for the deep that coucheth). Rovetzet (coucheth) is feminine, hence tehom (the deep) must be feminine. Ezek. 31:4 reads,

tehom romematehu (the deep made it to grow). Since romematehu is feminine, tehom, too, must be feminine. I.E. makes this point because tehom is masculine in Ps. 42:8. Thus we see that tehom is both masculine and feminine. The meaning of With blessings of heaven above, Blessings of the deep that coucheth beneath is that rain will descend from the heavens above upon the land of Joseph and that the deep which coucheth beneath the earth will fill its rivers and springs with an abundance of water.
BLESSINGS OF THE BREASTS, AND OF THE WOMB. Jacob likened the breasts to heaven and the womb to the earth, 181 Our verse reads, With blessings of heaven…Blessings of the deep…Blessings of the breasts, and of the womb. According to I.E. breast and womb are similar to heaven and earth in that they produce life-giving substance and bring forth fruit. Hence they are included in the same verse. its meaning being that Joseph will be blessed with many children. 182 For an alternate interpretation see Krinsky and Cherez. The opposite of this blessing is the curse, Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts (Hos. 9:14).

Verse 26

THE BLESSINGS OF THY FATHER. These blessings which I have blessed you with are mighty and are added to the blessing with which my progenitors blessed me. 183 The point being, may you be blessed with the mighty blessings with which I bless you (birkat avikhah gaveru) plus the blessings with which my begetters blessed me (al birkat horai). Cherez explains that I.E. interprets al (beyond) as meaning im (with, plus). [PROGENITORS.] Horai is to be rendered my begetters. 184 The root of horai is heh, resh, heh which means to be pregnant or to conceive. However, inasmuch as horai is in the plural it must refer to both Jacob's mother and father. We obviously cannot explain horai as meaning the ones who bore me. Rather it must be interpreted to mean the ones who begot me (Cherez). Va-tahar (and she gave birth to) in and she gave birth to (va-tahar) Miriam (I Chron. 4:17) 185 Here, too, the root heh, resh, heh does not means to conceive or be pregnant with, for Chronicles deals with births and not with pregnancies. Thus va-tahar in I Chron. 4:17 means she gave birth to. and horah (brought forth) in, A man-child is brought forth (horah) (Job 3:3) 186 Here, too, the root heh, resh, heh does not mean to conceive but to bring forth, for its parallel reads ivvaled (I was born). are similar.
UNTO THE UTMOST BOUND. Ta'avat (utmost bound of) comes from the same root as ve-hitavvitem (and ye shall mark out your line) (Num. 34:10). The meaning of our verse is: these blessings will be as high as the line marked out by the everlasting hills.
THE PRINCE AMONG HIS BRETHREN. Nezir (prince of) comes from the same root as nezer (crown). 187 It means crowned, the one who was crowned over his brethren (Krinsky, Weiser and Cherez). Filwarg suggests reading, "From the same root as nazir (Nazirite)." This reading fits in very well with I.E.'s comparison of nezir to nediv, for nazir has the same vocalization as nadiv, both in the absolute and in the construct. Thus in the absolute we have nazir and nadiv and in the construct nezir and nediv. It is in the construct with echav (his brethren) and is therefore vocalized nezir. Compare, nediv lev (willing-hearted) (Ex. 35:22).

Verse 27

BENJAMIN. Jacob compared Benjamin to a wolf because Benjamin was mighty. The men of Gibeah are proof of this. 188 At Gibeah 26,700 Benjamites defeated an army of 400,000 Israelites. Cf. Jud. 20.
THE PREY. Ad (the prey) has the same meaning as the Aramaic word for spoil (ada). 189 Reading kemo targum shelal as in Vat. Ebr. 38 rather than targum shalal as in the printed manuscripts. Also cf. Kimchi's

commentary on Is. 33:23. Similarly, ad in Then is the prey (ad) of a great spoil divided (Is. 33:23) and in Until the day that I rise up to the prey (ad) (Zeph. 3:8); and iddim (a polluted garment) (Is. 64:5). 190 I.E. on Is. 64:5 notes that a garment taken in spoil is polluted by blood. He points out that iddim and ed are similar. I.E. interprets ed (prey) to mean spoil..
[AND AT EVEN HE DIVIDETH.] At even he divideth among his children the prey that he has taken as spoil. Joshua says 191 A Karaite scholar. that our verse alludes to King Saul who defeated the Amalekites. 192 Thus Saul is likened to a wolf who takes spoil. Saul defeated the Amalekites and despoiled them. Cf. I Sam. 15. He explains In the morning as alluding to the beginning of Israel's kingdom 193 At the beginning of Israel's kingdom Saul, who came from the tribe of Benjamin, despoiled Amalek. In exile, Mordecai the Benjamite despoiled Haman who was an Amalekite. Cf. Es. 8:1,2, On that day did king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman…unto Esther the queen…And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman. and at even as referring to the period of Israel's exile with regard to Mordecai. However, this interpretation is the way of the Midrash. 194 Cf. Bereshit Rabbah 99:3 and Tanchuma 1:14; 2:15. It is hard to understand why I.E. quotes this interpretation in the name of a Karaite when it is found in the Midrash. Onkelos' interpretation of our verse is well known. 195 Onkelos explains the "spoil" as referring to the portions which the priests received from sacrifices offered in the temple which was erected in the territory of Benjamin.

Verse 28

EVERY ONE ACCORDING TO HIS BLESSING. The blessing which Jacob gave each one of his sons came to pass upon each one. The meaning of every one according to his blessing is similar in meaning to each man according to the interpretation of his dream (Gen. 41:11). 196 Joseph's interpretation of the dreams came true for the butler and the baker, each man according to the interpretation of his dream. (Gen. 41:11).

Verse 29

AND HE CHARGED THEM. He (Jacob) charged that all should go along with Joseph to bury him. 197 And he charged them refers to bury me with my fathers. In the text they are not directly connected, hence I.E.'s comment. Krinsky points out that Jacob had made Joseph take an oath to bury him in the cave of Machpelah (Gen. 47:30). He now commanded all of his sons to join Joseph in his burial. Therefore, according to Krinsky, I.E. notes that the charge in our verse was to all of Jacob's sons.

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

HE GATHERED UP HIS FEET INTO THE BED. Until then he had been sitting on the bed with his feet dangling over its edge as is contemporarily the

custom in Christian communities. The beds in Moslem countries are constructed differently from the beds in Christian countries. 198 I.E. explains that Egyptian beds were the same as the beds used in Christian countries; hence it was possible for Jacob's feet to dangle from his bed. However, had his bed been like those used in Moslem countries, that is, a bed that lies flat on the ground, this would have been impossible. I.E. makes this point so that readers in Moslem countries could understand how Jacob could be in bed with his feet over its side.

Chapter 50

Verse 1

Verse 2

AND THE PHYSICIANS EMBALMED ISRAEL. They powdered his body with a preservative. 1 This according to I.E. is the way a body is embalmed (Weiser). Krinsky holds that I.E. believes that only Jacob was embalmed in this manner so that his body would be spared the desecration that the usual embalming procedure entails. It is possible, though a bit far fetched, that chanetah (putteth forth) in The fig-tree putteth forth (chanetah) her green figs (Cant. 2:13) is analogous to va-yechantu (embalmed). 2 Cf. I.E.'s comment on Cant. 2:13, " Chanetah means sweetened. Others say it means powdered, from the word va-yechantu."

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

WHICH I HAVE DIGGED. Kariti means I have digged. Kariti is similar to yikhreh in if a man shall dig (yikhreh) a pit (Ex. 21:33). 3 According to Krinsky, I.E. believes that Jacob prepared his own grave in the cave of Machpelah.

Verse 6

Verse 7

AND WITH HIM WENT UP ALL THE SERVANTS OF PHARAOH. All of Egypt with the exception of Joseph are called servants of Pharaoh. 4 The verse speaks of the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house. If the aforementioned are elders, why does the Bible refer to them as servants? Hence I.E.'s comment. According to Cherez and Krinsky, I.E. was troubled by the clause all the servants of Pharaoh. If all the servants went along with Joseph to bury Jacob then no servants remained in Egypt to serve Pharaoh. This appears highly unlikely. Hence I.E. points out that all the servants refers to the Egyptians who accompanied Jacob's body, for all the Egyptians are called Pharaoh's servants.

Verse 8

Verse 9

[CHARIOTS. The word rechev (chariot) is similar in meaning to mirkevet (chariot). 5 Cf. Gen. 41:43, mirkevet ha-mishneh (the second chariot). This comment is omitted in some editions of the Mikraot Gedolot. HORSEMEN. The meaning of parashim (horsemen) is well-known.]

Verse 10

AND HE MADE A MOURNING FOR HIS FATHER SEVEN DAYS. This, as our sages of blessed memory say, took place after they interred Jacob. 6 What I.E. means is, even though the actual burial of Jacob is reported in verse 13, it occurred before he made a mourning for his father seven days. This is so because the sages of the talmud say that mourning commences after the burial of the deceased. Cf. Sanhedrin. 47b.

Verse 11

Verse 12

AND HIS SONS DID UNTO HIM. That is: And behold his sons did as he commanded them, namely, carried him and buried him in the place that he commanded them to inter him. 7 Since the mourning described in verse 10 took place after the burial of Jacob we cannot interpret And his sons did unto him, etc., as a report of what happened after the mourning for Jacob. It is rather a report of what Jacob’s sons did for their father.

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

IT MAY BE THAT JOSEPH WILL HATE US. Perhaps Joseph will harbor a hatred for us. Yistemenu (will hate us) is analogous to va-yistom in And Esau hated (va-yistom) Jacob (Gen. 27:41). 8 There, too, I.E. interprets: and Esau harbored hatred toward Jacob. The word lu (it may be) is used in Scripture in many ways. 9 Cf. Rashi, “ Lu is sometimes used to denote a request, or to denote, would that… lu is also used to denote if and perhaps…and lu is also sometimes used to denote it may be.”

Verse 16

Verse 17

I PRAY THEE. Anna (I pray thee) is a conciliatory expression.

Verse 18

Verse 19

[FOR AM I IN THE PLACE OF GOD.] Saadiah Gaon explains this as meaning: am I in the place of God that you fall before my face and say, Behold, we are thy bondmen?

Verse 20

TO PASS. Aso (to pass) is an infinitive. 10 The usual form of this infinitive is asot, hence I.E.'s comment.

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

CHILDREN OF THE THIRD GENERATION. In view of the fact that bene (children of) is in the construct with shilleshim (third), the children referred to are the fourth generation. 11 The children of the third generation are the fourth generation.
WERE BORN. Yulledu (were born) means grew up. 12 They weren't actually born on his knees. Joseph raised them; that is, he hugged them and placed them on his knees as a father does when raising his children.

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

AND THEY EMBALMED HIM. The physicians. 13 The text doesn't say who embalmed him. However, in view of verse 2, the reference must be to the physicians. Our text is thus abridged. It should have read: And the physicians embalmed Israel (Weiser).
AND HE WAS PUT IN A COFFIN. Someone put him in a coffin. 14 According to I.E. va-yisem is a kal which means, and he put However, the subject has been omitted. Hence we must interpret it as, and someone put. Similarly the word oto (him) is to be added to the text Hence va-yisem ba-aron should be rendered, and someone put him in a coffin. The root of va-yisem is yod, sin, mem and follows the paradigm of va-yitzer (formed) (Gen. 2:7). 15 Va-yitzer is a peh yod, kal. So is va-yisem. However, Rabbi Jonah, the grammarian, says that va-yisem is vocalized with a chirik in place of a shuruk. 16 According to Rabbi Jonah ibn Janach va-yisem is a hofal from the root yod, sin, mem meaning, and he was put. However, if va-yisem was a hofal it would have been vocalized va-yusam. Hence Rabbi Jonah says that va-yisem has been vocalized with a chirik in place of a shuruk. According to Rabbi Jonah va-yisem ba-aron is to be rendered: and

he was put in a coffin. The advantage of this interpretation is that one does not have to add the pronoun oto (him) to the text and the subject is not omitted from the verse. However, I consider this interpretation to be far-fetched. 17 If Scripture intended to use a hofal, it would have vocalized va-yisem like a hofal. In his Sefer Ha-Tzachot I.E. sharply criticizes Ibn Janach for suggesting that Biblical words be read other than as written. I.E. writes, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul not to believe the words of the grammarian (Ibn Janach) who noted in his book (Sefer Ha-Rikmah) more than a hundred (Biblical) words that require change…Heaven forbid such a notion…his book is fit to be burned." [IN A COFFIN.] The reason why ba-aron (in a coffin) is vocalized with a kamatz is that it signifies the coffin which he had prepared for himself. 18 Be-aron means in a coffin. Ba-aron on the other hand means in the coffin. Hence our verse must be referring to a specific coffin, i.e., to the coffin that Joseph prepared for himself.